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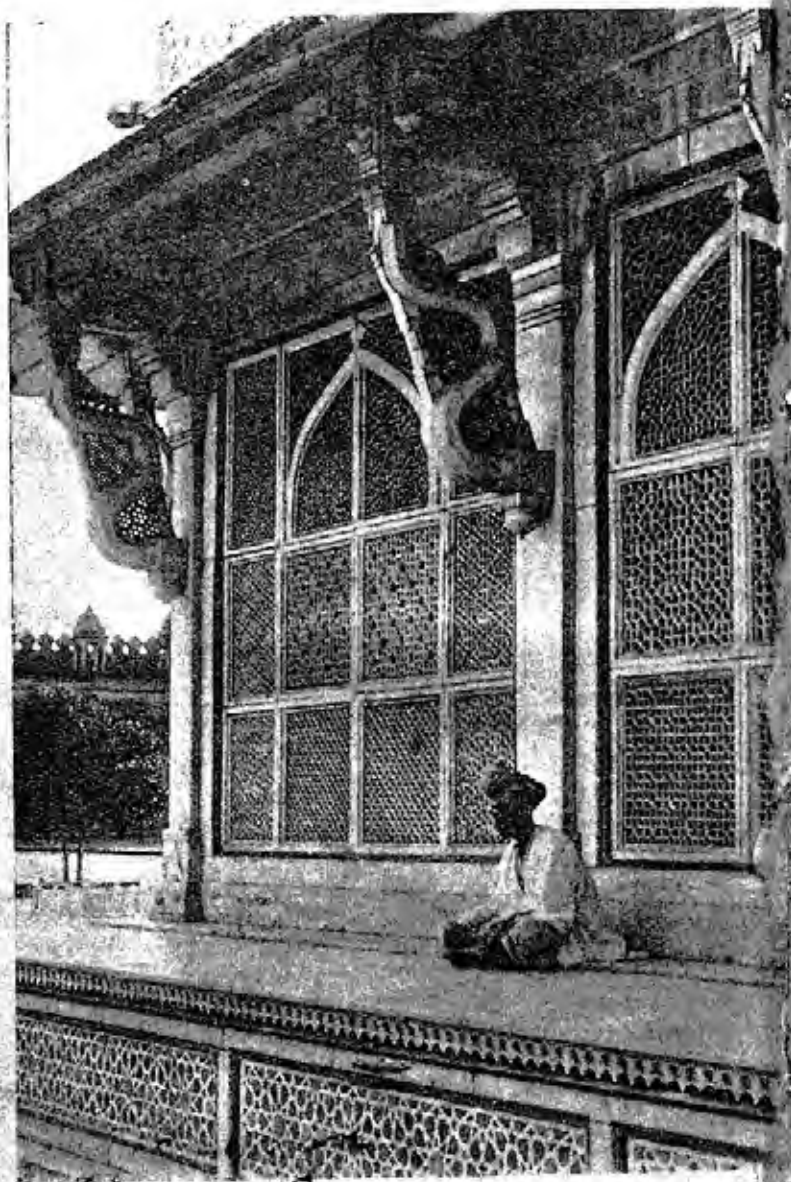
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Fatehpur Sikri (Tomb of Sheikh Salim Chisti)

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THE CITY OF TAJ

Illustrated

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By

NURUL HASAN SIDDIQUI

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With a foreword by

Dr. TARA CHAND, M.A., D. Phil.



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To

My Beloved Child

Nasim-un-nissa

Who is no more.

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FOREWORD

The environs of Agra are redolent with memories of great and stirring events in the history of our country, for it is situated in the midst of Vrajamandal the region where the ancient Yadavas dwelt. Here on the right bank of the Jumna extended the forest glades—the Vanas of Madhu and Vrinda, where grew up Mathura and Brindaban famous alike in the history of political affairs as of religion and literature. Legend associates the stories of Vraja with Krishna who wandered through its forests as a cowherd and charmed maids and youth with the music of his flute, who freed the land from the tyranny of Kans the oppressor of his people, who helped the Pandavas to regain their legitimate rights and who gave through the song-celestial (the Bhagvada Gita) religious teachings, whose sublimity has been recognised through the ages.

Later it became the centre of the Satraps who dominated the north for a considerable period of time. When the Muslims established their dominion in India Agra gradually rose into prominence, till it became the capital of the Empire. For nearly four hundred years Agra was virtually the centre of the Indian empire, for the Lodis, the Surs and many of the Mughal Emperors preferred

it for the residence of their court to Delhi, and they adorned it with monuments whose glory will never pass away. Agra was chosen by the British as the first capital of the North Western Province and the Province still bears its name, conjointly with that of Oudh.

Agra is equally important from the point of view of Literary history. It is one of the towns situated in the region over which Sursena Yadava ruled. From its ruler the region and the language acquired their name. The ancient Saurseni tongue became the mother of many a spoken dialect, not the least important amongst which is the Khariboli whose two literary forms Urdu and Hindi claim the homage of all India to-day. Braj Bhakha another dialect which flourished here developed literature of immortal fame. Surdasa and Ghalib who lived and laboured in the city of Agra will continue to shed lustre upon its name and their memory will remain so long as Hindi and Urdu are spoken and read.

Of the monuments of this famous city and its neighbourhood Mr. Nurul Hasan Siddiqui has compiled with commendable zeal a descriptive and historical account. He has endeavoured to steer a middle course between the descriptive catalogue of a guide book and a learned historical treatise. In his book he has combined the methods of both and produced a useful compilation which ought to supply a general need. It should stimulate the

lovers of Indian monuments of such rare nobility to acquire a first hand knowledge of them and develop a lasting faith in India's cultural greatness based upon enlightened reason.

TARA CHAND.

*Principal,
Kayastha Pathshala
University College,
Allahabad.*



PREFACE

In the present book I have endeavoured to give a detailed information about the historical buildings, monuments and mausoleums built by the Moghals in Agra. Much has been said and written about the Taj, Fatehpur Sikri, Itimad-ud-Daula and other buildings, but I have dealt with the subject in a direct and piquant way, trying to be brief with the history of the kings associated with the buildings and monuments upto the British period. All historical facts and the architectural view-point have been concisely narrated and appropriate and important passages from the Arabic, Persian and Tughra writings inscribed on the main arches, walls, and tombs, with their English version have been given, which are of immense historical value and will be found most interesting to the reader. The chief idea underlying the present work is to enable my country-men generally and the foreigners particularly to genuinely appreciate and value the various mausoleums and monuments, the legacy of the Moghals, which they have left to India and the world.

The sources of information, as far as possible have been acknowledged in the body of the book, but the chief works upon which I have mainly

relied are:— *Shahnuma* or the History of the Reign of Shahjehan, *Ain-i-Akbar*, *Farista*, *Syrul-Mutaakhirin*, *The Modern City of Agra* by Syed Mohummad Latif, *The District Gazetteer*, *Guide to Fatehpur Sikri* by Maulvi Muhammad Ashraf Husain, Mr. James Fergusson and Mr. Bayard Taylor, and other writers. The chapter on the Moghal architecture is the result of the special study of 'Indian Architecture' by Mr. E. B. Havell and Fergusson. As these writers differ very much about Moghal architecture in India, I have given my own views on the subject based on logical conclusion and the historical facts purely from the architectural point of view. I have already mentioned in the body of the book that the Moghal architecture was the outcome of the extant Buddhist-Hindu architecture, influenced by the Islamic ideas. The Moghals were the greatest builders of the world. They were foreigners in India but they adopted this country as their home and made a great development in art, science, language, and other branches of social life of the country. They even foresook their own mother-tounge and evolved a new language called Urdu, based on the different spoken languages in this vast continent, so that the entire people may be able to understand each other and live in permanent peace.

The book must speak for itself. Here I would acknowledge the debt it owes to many of

my friends, and specially to Mr A. K. Seyne of the Government Public Library, Allahabad, who not only encouraged me to publish this work but extended to me every possible help and has very kindly done the indexing portion of the book. It also owes much to the Director-General of Archaeology in India, and his Department, for their kind help in lending the illustrations (Copyright, Archaeological Survey of India) without which I would not have been able to give the illustrations of Fatepur Sikri (Frontispiece), the Tomb of Sheikh Saleem Chisti, Dewan Khas (Interior view), Panch Mahal (General View), Jama Masjid, Buland Darwaza, Fatehpur Sikri, and Dargah, which I thankfully acknowledge.

15th May, 1940,
Meston Mansion,
Agra Province Zamindars'
Association, Allahabad.

N. H. Siddiqui,



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AGRA

Agra, or Akbarabad, the city of Akbar the Great, is one of the foremost historic cities of Northern India, famous for its monuments and mausoleums. It is situate on the West banks of the Jumna. It has a legendary history behind it, going back to the ancient Puranas as the scene of the incarnation of Vishnu. "Krishna", the cowherd God of the Hindus, is said to have played his melodious flute to captivate as usual the dairy-maids of this region, and it is recorded that Agra in the days of Raja Kansa, the ruler of Muttra, was a strong principality. Passing from legend to history we find that during the invasion of Sultan Mahmud Ghaznavi in 1022. A. D. it was devastated.

by his armies. Since then we find that the city went through various vicissitudes. The Ghoris, the Khilji, the Tughlak and the Sayyid dynasties held sway over it. It was during the time of Sultan Sikander Lodi in 1505 A. D. that Agra resumed some importance and assumed a strategic position as town and capital. The Lodi kings made Agra a great resort for the people of all nations; and learned men from Arabia, Persia and other countries of Asia, flocked to their courts, "where showers of honour and wealth always awaited them."

The Moghals then stepped into the shoes of the Lodis, and Babar, after the famous battle of Panipat, (29th April, 1526) wrested the Indian Empire from the house of the Lodis. Emperor Ibrahim Lodi, the last of the line was slain, and Babar took Delhi and directed Prince Humayun to lay siege to Agra which fell without any severe resistance. Prince Humayun, by nature of kind temperament, saved most of the important and ancient Hindu families from annihilation and plunder. It was here that the world famous diamond, *Koh-i-noor*, was presented to the Prince on account of the special consideration shown to the family of Vikramaditya, the Raja of Gwalior, living at Agra. Babar had to fight a decisive battle at Fatehpur-Sikri with Rana Sanga, the Rajput Chief in 1527, and having settled once for all his supremacy, he laid out a garden and founded a palace at Agra. Babar died on the 26th December 1530 at the *Charbagh* palace and three days after Babar's

death Humayun at the age of 23, was crowned in the same palace at Agra, as Emperor of Hindustan. Humayun could not make his position stable and his brothers revolted against him. Sher Shah Sur, an Afghan Chief, seizing this opportunity, marched on with a strong force and took possession of Agra in 1540, and Humayun had to flee for his life. Sher Shah's reign, though short, will always be remembered in the annals of history for architectural work, good administration and public buildings constructed during his reign throughout India. The successors of Sher Shah fought among themselves and Humayun, after his defeat at Kanauj and the consequent flight to Persia, returned after an exile of ten years. He, with the help of the Persian army defeated Sikander Shah Sur and took possession of Agra and Delhi in 1555. Humayun did not enjoy this long. Soon after this victory he died at Delhi and his son, the young Akbar, had to fight a decisive battle with Hemu to establish himself as Emperor of India.

Akbar

The name of Emperor Akbar is rightly associated with Agra as he was the virtual founder of this city in 1558 A. D. Abul Fazal in "*Akbar-nama*" depicts that Emperor Akbar made Agra the capital of the Empire and took up his residence in the citadel known as *Badalgarh*. The grandees of the realm were assigned suitable accomodation, thus rendering the capital a centre of wealth and

prosperity. The beautiful edifices of the nobles and officials of the State presented such a picturesque sight that the citadel was known as *Daulat Khana*.

Akbar's mode of administering justice was direct and simple. He held public audience everyday in Darbar-i-am. It was not customary with him to sit on the throne. He gave all his orders in a standing posture while his ministers stood before him with folded hands. He used to hear all important cases personally and no sentence of death was ever carried out until the Emperor had personally pronounced it three times. At evenings private Durbar was held at Gulkhana. While religious reforms were always much to Akbar's heart, he always hated the communal questions. He treated the two principal creeds of India in terms of perfect equality and any distinction between Hindus and Muslims was always discouraged by him. In order to draw the two communities nearer he even married in Hindu Royal houses. With a view to remove religious and communal tension he invented his *Din-i-Ilahi* which was however, an utter failure. Akbar was a genius gifted with a strong memory coupled with inventive capacity. He invented guns, tents, candle-sticks and a cart drawn by elephants. The game of chess was one of his hobbies.

The last days of Akbar were very unhappy due to his domestic affairs. His son Salim turned

rebellious and the relations between father and son were much embittered. Salim afterwards submitted, and the Emperor on his death-bed forgave him. Akbar died at Agra Fort on 13th October, 1605 at the age of sixty-three in the fifty-first year of his reign.

The chief buildings of his reign in Agra are his own splendid mausoleum at Sikandra, the Mausoleum of Sheikh Saleem Chishti, and the Agra Fort.

Jehangir

After performing the funeral ceremony of his father, Jehangir entered the fort of Agra by the Western gate and was crowned Emperor of India in October, 1605, at the age of 38 years, and assumed the title of Nur-Uddin Jehangir. All kinds of jubilation took place to celebrate the occasion, and the ceremony of accession to the throne was performed on a grand scale befitting the traditions of the great Moghals.

To commemorate this great historical scene an inscription was inscribed on a stone panel of the guard-room in Delhi-gate of the Fort where it exists even to this day. The last line runs: "May our King Jehangir be the King of the World." The new King after ascending the throne conferred honours and rewards upon his friends of adversity.

In the year 1611 Jehangir married Nurjehan, a lady of refined taste, artistic instincts and sound

judgment. Nurjehan wielded a life-long influence over the Emperor and no important office in the state was ever filled without her consultation and counsel. Even the foreign treaties and state-affairs were concluded with her approval.

Jehangir was always alive to hear the complaints, and redress the wrong done to his subjects. The famous chain of Justice, which was kept hanging over the ground opposite the palace, was a device to attain this object. One who demanded justice shook the chain, and the King hearing the bell used to grant him an audience. The reign of Jehangir is famous for justice. There are numerous anecdotes connected with it that are current even to this day.

The European travellers have paid glowing tributes to the splendour of the court of Jehangir, his reign and the city of Agra "as a great populous city entirely built of stone with a great deal of merchandise." Jehangir died on his way to Rajawari on 12th October 1627. His remains were brought to Lahore, and according to his will were entered in the garden of Nurjehan on the banks of the Ravi.

The principal buildings constructed during his reign were a portion of the Mausoleum of Akbar at Sikandara, the Jehangiri Mahal, the Mausoleum of Itmad-ud-daula, the Bath of Ali Verdi Khan, the mosque of Mohammad Khan and the tower known after the name of Boland Khan.

Shahjahan

Soon after the death of Jehangir, there commenced a keen race for the kingship. The supporters of the various claimants to the throne played their part most intriguingly and hypocritically, and there arose an imminent danger of a civil war. Shahjahan and Shaharyar were in the field. Nurjehan favoured the succession of Shaharyar, and her brother Asif Khan wished for the success of his son-in-law Shahjahan. Nurjehan's influence was on decline and the strategem of Asif Khan succeeded as he apparently favoured Prince Dawar Bux, otherwise known as Bolaki, the eldest son of Khusro, only as a matter of policy, to appease the Umras and nobles, who showed great sympathy with Bulaki, and as a consequence of it, the sham king was proclaimed Emperor of Hindustan. Asif Khan thus became all powerful, and steadily winning over the grandees of the realm, he was secretly paving way for Shahjahan's success, who was in reality waiting for an opportune time to occupy the throne. Treachery was played with Bolaki and Shahjahan was proclaimed Emperor of India at Agra on the 6th February, 1628, amidst the acclamation of the multitude, the nobles and the army presenting the Royal Salute. A coronation Darbar was held at Agra and the new King assumed the title of Sultan Shahab-Uddin Mohammad.

In the year 1639, Shahjahan founded new Delhi called Shahjahanabad after his name and

shifted the capital from Agra to Delhi. In the year 1657, the Emperor became very sick and Dara Shikoh, the eldest son, as a temporary measure, was entrusted with the administration of the State. The sons of Shahjahan having heard of the news became restive, and Shuja, the Viceroy of Bengal, and Murad, of Gujrat, declared their independence in their respective provinces, and marched with their armies to the Capital. Aurangzeb who had a direct information about the Emperor's condition through his sister Roshan Ara, also marched from Deccan to the Capital and joined Murad to overthrow Darashikoh. Dara marched from Agra to oppose his brothers but was defeated and fled to Delhi (Battle of Samogarh 1658.)

Three days after the battle Aurangzeb marched to Agra and took possession of the city. He interfered in no way with the interior of the palace, his only object being to find a favourable opportunity for seizing the person of the Emperor. He was lucky enough to have secured the assistance of his sister Roshan Ara Begum, and Shahjahan was induced to receive Mahmood, the son of Aurangzeb, who on entering the fortress, gained over the guards and entered the royal chamber of Shahjahan. The Emperor was held in captivity and Mahmood announced to Shahjahan "Your great age, my lord, has rendered you incapable of reigning. Retire with your wives into the palace

gardens; pass the remainder of your days in tranquillity. We do not grudge you the right of the day, but you dishonour the throne. You must resign it to your children." While this simple yet strange drama was being staged in the interior of the palace, Aurangzeb was consolidating his position by winning over the various Umras and grantees to his side, who had secured every honour, richness and position from the old injured monarch. It was all the more regrettable that not even one voice was heard against Aurangzeb, nor any movement was launched in favour of the Emperor, and it seems that all his subjects abandoned him and turned their eyes to the rising sun, recognising no one as King but Aurangzeb. Shahjahan yielding to the circumstances offered Aurangzeb the crown and the keys of the palace, and henceforth Aurangzeb became master of the Agra citadel.

With the exception of his confinement, Shahjahan was always treated with respect and filial devotion by Aurangzeb.

Shahjahan died in the early hours of the night of Monday, the 28th. Rajjab (1666. A. D.) at the age of seventy-six having reigned thirty-one years.

At the time of Emperor's death Aurangzeb was at Delhi, his son Prince Mohammad Moazzam (afterwards Shah Alam Bahadur Shah) who was encamping at a distance from Agra hurried to the

scene on receiving the news of the Emperor's demise and performed all the necessary funeral rites in connection with the Emperor's death. On hearing the news Aurangzeb wept bitterly and all the nobles and courtiers present were shocked to see his grief. Aurangzeb sobbing said "It was my desire to be present at the last moment of my father to have a last look of his face and obtain his benedictions, but unfortunately none of these desires have been fulfilled." He proceeded to Agra to pay respects to the tomb of his father and offer condolence to the members of the Royal family. He reached Agra, read the "Fateha" and shed tears of grief at the sight of the tomb of his parents. Having distributed twelve thousand rupees as alms to the poor, he read the afternoon prayer in the Mausoleum. During his visit to Agra, Aurangzeb daily visited the tomb of his parents, and read Fateha and held the meetings of the "Milad Sharif."

Shahjahan is regarded as one of the greatest builders in the world during the 16th century, and his chief buildings at Agra, are the Shish Mahal, the Moti Masjid and the famous Taj. Notwithstanding his pre-occupations with war, and the constructions of various celebrated edifices which cost crores of rupees, the finances of the State suffered no deficits, and he left a huge accumulation of bullion and jewels in the State coffers. According to Tavernier, "Shahjahan reigned

not such as a King over his subjects, but rather as a father over his family and children." Apart from building so many splendid palaces and edifices, Shahjahan can rightly be accused of not building roads in his kingdom and this accusation will stand even against the whole line of the great Moghal Kings in the annals of history.

Aurangzeb

Aurangzeb after the death of Shahjahan assumed the title of Alamgir and held a grand Darbar at Agra and bestowed Jagirs, money and title on the Umras of the State. The Emperor resided for some little time at Agra and had to leave the place due to wars in Deccan. The city since then lost its popularity as a royal resort and soon degenerated into a second rate city, the residence of a Provincial Governor.

The sweeping reforms in the State and the continuous war to suppress the turbulent chiefs, told much upon the Emperor's health. His spirit of perseverance, indefatigable industry combined with the attention to the minutest details of State works, culminated in a serious break-down of his health, and the Emperor was confined to bed. Aurangzeb died in 1707. The principal buildings of his reign are the Hall of Public audience in the Fort, and the beautiful marble screen enclosure around the tomb of Mumtaz Mahal, and Shahjahan.

Shah Alam Bahadur Shah

Agra again resumed some political importance after the death of Aurangzeb. But it was as short-lived as the reign of his successors. The fight for the vacant throne ensued between the three sons of Aurangzeb, Prince Moazzam and his brother Prince Azam. The latter was defeated and killed near Ajaju close to Akbarabad. Moazzam proclaimed himself Emperor under the name of Shah Alam Bahadur Shah. The victory was commemorated by the construction of a mosque and Sarai at Jajan which still exist.

Furrukhsera & Nikosera

On the death of Bahadur Shah the usual struggle for the throne ensued among his sons. Jahandar Shah, the eldest, after defeating and putting to death his brother, Azmushan, had to fight against Furrukhsera, son of Azmushan who having heard the news hurried with a strong army from Bengal, to give a battle to his uncle. He was assisted by the famous Syed brothers, Syed Husain Ali, Governor of Behar and Syed Abdullah of Allahabad. The famous battle of Kuch-behari (1712) near Agra was fought. Jahandar Shah was defeated and put to flight. Furrukhsera accordingly was proclaimed Emperor and assumed the throne on 1st January, 1713, and gave public audience. Furrukhsera was a creature of Syed brothers and the dignity of the house of the Mighty Moghals was now shattered to pieces. Henceforth the

Kings who ascended the throne were a puppet in the hands of the Syed brothers, who were rightly called the King-makers. Furrukhsere, who incurred the displeasure of the Syed brothers, was on some pretext dethroned and put to death in 1719, and Rafi-ud-dara-jat and Rafi-ud-daula, nominal kings ascended the throne, who each reigned for a few months and died. Nikosere, son of Prince Akbar, youngest son of Aurangzeb, having been taken out of his prison in the citadel of Agra, was proclaimed Emperor. The Syed brothers were much alarmed at the news and they soon came from Delhi with a large army and the fort of Agra was besieged. Nikosere and his principal adherents were made prisoners and after the fall of the fortress, Amir-ul-Umra Husain Ali Khan, took possession of the entire treasure, jewels and valuables, which had been deposited there for three centuries and which successive Emperors from the time of Sikandar Lodi had accumulated. The resources of the Syeds having much increased by this victory their position became more consolidated and they again set up a candidate for kingship on the death of Rafi-ud-daula, named Mohammad Roushan Akhtar, one of the sons of Bahadur Shah. The new Emperor assumed the title of Abul-Fateh Nasir Uddin Mohammad Shah, and removed the seat of Government from Delhi to Agra. Distrust between the Syed brothers and the Emperor soon arose. Deccan was the first to declare independence, as Chin Kilich Khan sur-

named Asif Jah, whose descendants are now known as the Nizam of Deccan, defied the authority of the Syeds and with a large army was advancing in the direction of Burhanpur. The Syed brothers were defeated and thus ended their supremacy, as also Husain Ali Khan, one of the brothers was assassinated by a hired ruffian. The surviving brother Abdullah Khan set up Prince Ibrahim, grandson of Bahadur Shah for the Moghal Gaddi, who assumed the title of Abul-Fateh Zahir-Uddin Mohammad Ibrahim. But he was defeated by the army of Mohammad Shah and then Abdullah Khan was taken prisoner. Mohammad Shah, after this victory proceeded to Delhi, and the seat of Government was also removed there. Agra was again reduced to a second rate city, and Saadat Khan surnamed Barhan-u-Mulk, whose descendants subsequently became Nawabs of Oudh was appointed the first Viceroy of Agra.

The Marathas in 1736. A. D. raided Agra under Mulhar Rao Holkar. The country beyond Jumna, was ravaged, but the inroad was checked by the Imperial army and the Marathas retired. The power of the Jats continued to increase after the death of Mohammad Shah in 1748, and during the reign of his son and successors the Jats became very powerful.

Ahmad Shah & Alamgir II.

The position of the Moghal Kings was insecure and they were at the mercy of their generals

and officials. Ahmad Shah was deposed in 1746 as he plotted against Ghazi-Uddin, the Commander in-chief, and was taken prisoner and also deprived of his sight. Alamgir II. was proclaimed Emperor with Ghazi-Uddin as Wazir, and Shuja-Uddaula as Viceroy of Oudh.

Ahmad Shah Abdali made his third invasion in 1757, and Delhi was soon conquered and Agra was besieged. The invader stayed very little in the country and after plundering and sacking the neighbourhood of Agra retired from the country to his own native dominions. But he appointed Najibuddaula, a Rohilla chief, to be Commander-in-chief of the Imperial forces. This excited the jealousy of Ghaziuddin, who called the Marathas under Mulhar Rao to his aid. This action of Ghaziuddin opened a new chapter in the history of the Marathas, who took possession of Agra in 1758, and Delhi Fort after a month's siege. The Moghal King was now at the mercy of the Marathas. Alamgir II. was assassinated and Ali Gohar, son of the deceased Emperor, was raised to the throne, who assumed the title of Shah Alam II.

Shah Alam II.

The power of the Marathas had now reached its zenith and their frontier extended far and wide in the north and South. But Ahmad Shah Abdali defeated them at Panipat in 1761, which shattered their power. Thereafter the Jats came in power,

and took the Fort of Agra by displacing the Marathas. The Jats were very cruel to Agra, as the gates of Sikandra are stated to have been blown away, the armour of Akbar was removed, and the massive silver doors of Taj were taken away by them. After the Jats there arose a state of uncertainty and the Kings were no longer in the field. Only the Provincial Governors were in the limelight. Najaf Khan, Muhammad Beg and Mirza Shafi were the only men left in the field who made a bid against each other for supremacy.

In the year 1787, the Marathas and Rajputs again came in the field to fight for the suzerainty, while the Emperor supported one against the other as the occasion demanded. Shah Alam was blinded and deposed by the Scindhia (10th August, 1788) who took possession of Delhi, and the mighty Moghal Empire was wiped off the Indian scene for ever. The collapse of the Mohammadan Government and the deterioration in Muslim character had worked sad havoc with the consequence that the whole community sank with the Empire.

The British

The British now became the virtual masters of Delhi after crushing the powers of Marathas and Jats. The British army under Lord Lake took possession of Delhi on 14th September, 1803. The unhappy blind King Shah Alam, was liberated from the confinement and restored to freedom and dignity

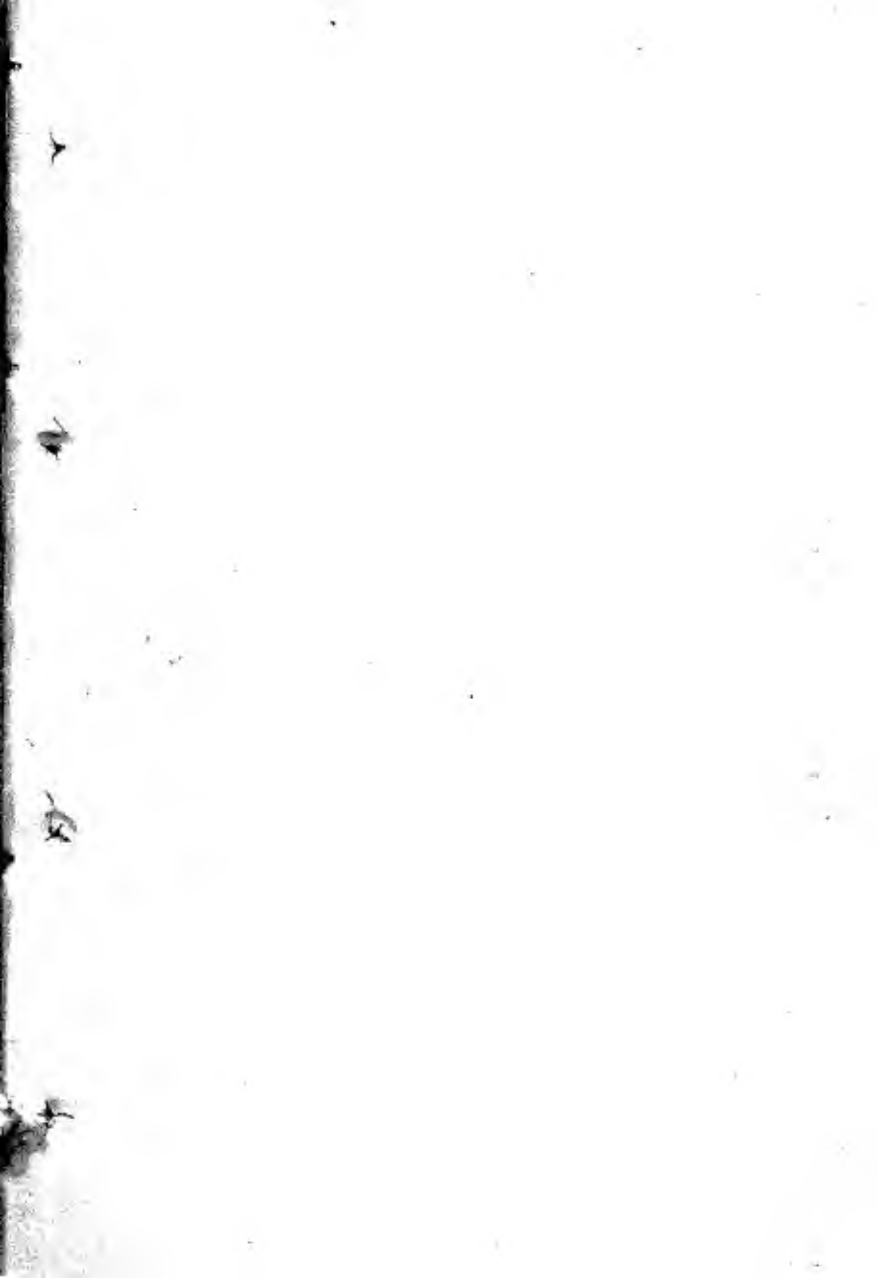
Subsequently, Agra was conquered and the fort was occupied on 18th October 1803 and peace and order was restored. In 1805, the newly conquered district of Agra, was placed under a Collector and in 1835 the first Lieutenant Governorship, for the North-Western Provinces, was constituted and Sir Charles Metcalfe was appointed the first Lieutenant Governor. Agra thus remained the capital of the North-Western Provinces for a period of 22 years. Nothing of importance happened during this period except the outbreak of Mutiny. There became an immediate danger of a general rising as a company of the Indian infantry had revolted, but it was soon pacified and order restored. Soon after, the British succeeded in quelling the mutiny in the neighbouring districts. Since then we find that there has been no event of importance worth mentioning.

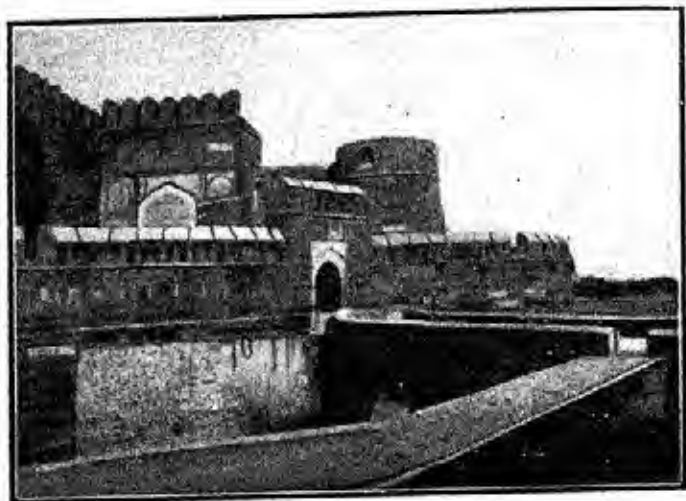
The subsequent history of Agra may be briefly told. The chief events were the removal of the head-quarters of the Government to Allahabad in 1858, and ten years after followed the removal of the High Court to the new Capital. The modern town of Agra is now the Headquarter of a division and is in a very flourishing condition. The modern education is becoming very popular, and in recent years the creation of the Agra University has made it a great centre of education for the neighbouring districts. It has also a well equipped medical college. The Central Prison and the Provincial Lunatic Asylum is a huge

building, about a mile and a half in circuit. Manufacture of beautiful and rich carpets, *Durries*, and other textile works are also famous. The town is becoming the principal market for leather works industry in the Province. The city has now become a great manufacturing centre and the trade and commerce of the town is fast developing. Stone work of Agra has acquired a world-wide fame owing to the presence of many famous architectural monuments. The most artistic craft of stone-carving and inlaying still flourishes. The delicate fretwork or tracery known as "Jali" in either sand-stone or marble is a speciality of the district. The embroidery work of Agra and manufacture of gold-lace of all description is famous in India.

Owing to its proximity to the sandy desert in the west, Agra is exposed to extremes of temperature. Heat during summer is intense while winter is the ideal season.

Apart from Muslims, Hindus and Christians, it has recently become the centre of Radha-Swami Sect. Radha-Swami faith derives its name from its original founder, the Supreme Being Radha Swami, who appeared in this world in human form and designated himself as *Sant-Satguru*. This sect has a colony called *Dayalbagh*, situated at a distance of about a mile from the town of Agra. It was founded in 1915 by his Holiness the late Sir Sahibjee Maharaj, the 5th Leader of the faith. It is an institution, educational and industrial, and is doing a great service to its members who are now more than a lakh.





The Gateway of Agra Fort

The Fort

The Agra Fort was built by Akbar in 1571 and is one of the greatest architectural works of India. It is a splendid specimen of the Saracenic style, and the credit of its design goes to the Emperor. It is a mile and a half in circuit and is built of red sand-stone. The principal gate of the Fort is known as the Delhi gate, a massive and imposing structure, with two octagonal towers, of red stone inlaid with fine ornamental designs of white marble. Next we find the *Nakkar Khana*, or the royal drum, which announced the court hours. The inner gate-way is the Hathi-pole with two stone elephants of exquisite workmanship bringing back to memory the Rajput heroes of Chittor whose memory was thus honoured by the Emperor. There is also a gate, called the *Darshan Darwaza*, or the gate of sight-seeing where the King with all his Umras and the public watched the elephant-fight, in which Akbar took great delight. To the south is the Amarsingh Gate, after the name of the veteran Rajput Amar Singh.

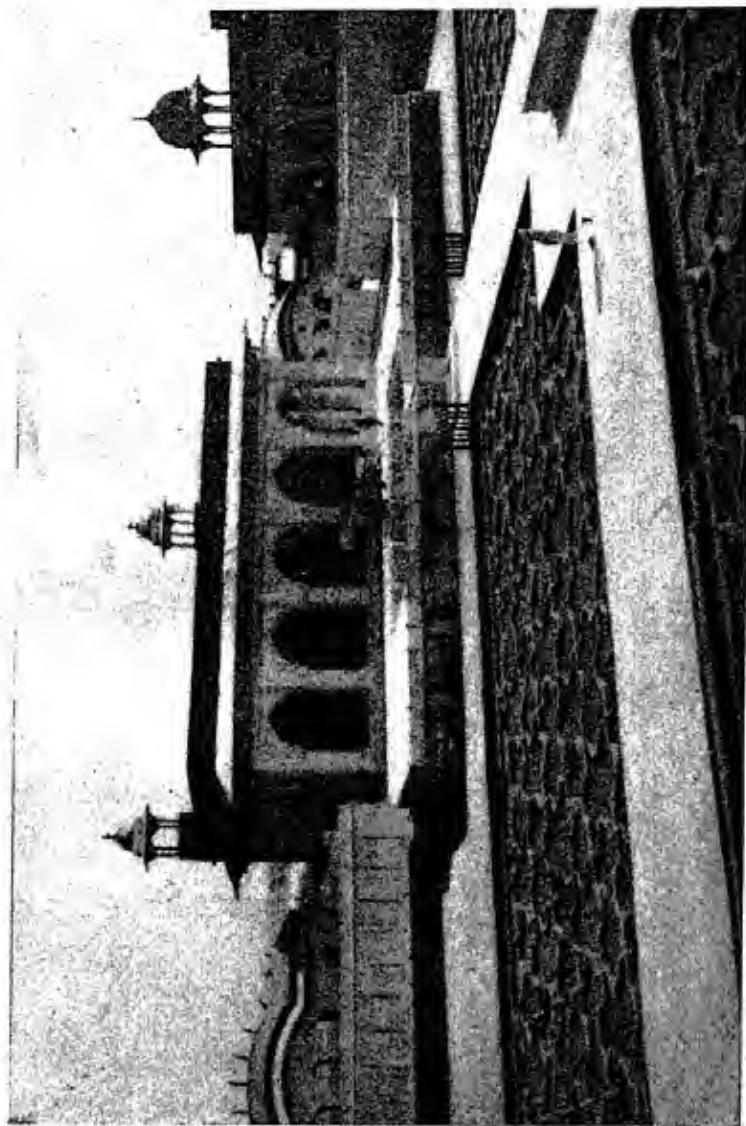
Diwan-i-Am

Diwan-i-Am or the Hall of public audience, is the place where the court receptions were usually held and the ambassadors and foreign envoys were received. It is a very big hall, 192 feet in length and 64 feet in breadth, with a majestic appearance, supported by three rows of

high pillars and connected by arches of white marble after the fashion of Saracenic style. The royal seat was on an elevated gallery, and the throne was plated with silver, having four silver lions studded with jewels and rubies, with a gold canopy over it. Allami Abul Fazal writes, "The Court Hall is continually scented with ambergris, ale-wood, and the incense is daily burnt in gold and silver censers, while sweet-smelling flowers are also used in large quantities. In Darbar, the order of precedence is very strictly observed and when His Majesty seats himself, all who are present perform "Kornish", and remain standing in their places according to their respective ranks and status. The ceremony of prostration is performed only by the commoners. Nothing upon earth surpassed the grandeur and solemnity of the scenes when the Emperor as the sole figure surrounded by a concourse of ruling chiefs and the nobility all brilliantly clad and displaying their sumptuous garments, inspired nothing but deep awe and reverence, as complete silence prevailed and all stood motionless like statues not a soul daring to cast his eyes on the king, not venturing to raise his sound except the royal heralds announcing the King."

Diwan-i-Khas

The cistern of Jahangir, Machhi Bhawan, and Mina Masjid, are also places of interest in the fort. Diwan-i-khas or the Hall of special audience is an



Khas Mahal



oblong room of white marble, 64 feet 9 inches long, 34 feet high. There are two splendid Halls most beautifully sculptured, which are regarded as models of perfection. The columns and arches are exquisitely carved and inlaid, while the walls are ornamented with vases and flowers. The gallery is painted with foliage of gold and azure and the floor was covered over with a carpet.

Khas Mahal

The Khas-Mahal or the apartments of the ladies of the Royal Harem, is built of red stone and its wall touches the water of the Jumna. All its chambers, corridors, and pavilions are of glittering white marble, most elegantly and elaborately carved and ornamented with flowers and festoons. Shahjahan built this lovely mansion, and its luxurious pavilions with gilded roof and domes of singular elegance and permanent beauty. The symmetry of the various portions and adaptation of one part to the other in this building furnish ample proof of the best taste and richness of style. The glittering produced by the combination of shades on the walls and roofs due to the elegant design, fills the curious observers with a sense of admiration.

The Khas-Mahal even today presents before the eye a living picture of the daily routine of the old days during the Emperor's time and it seems as if the Emperor and his retinue have just

vacated it. The famous gold chain of justice was fitted in this hall. The aggrieved pulled it and the King was thus informed and the petitioner was heard. Justice was dispensed direct by the Emperor himself.

The walls of the Mahal are adorned with couplets of Persian and the last line runs:—

چمنون گفت طبع حقائق شناس - سعادت سرائے و همایوں اساس

So said the mind which ever stands on the side of
truth

This is a mansion of prosperity and fortunate foundation,
tion.

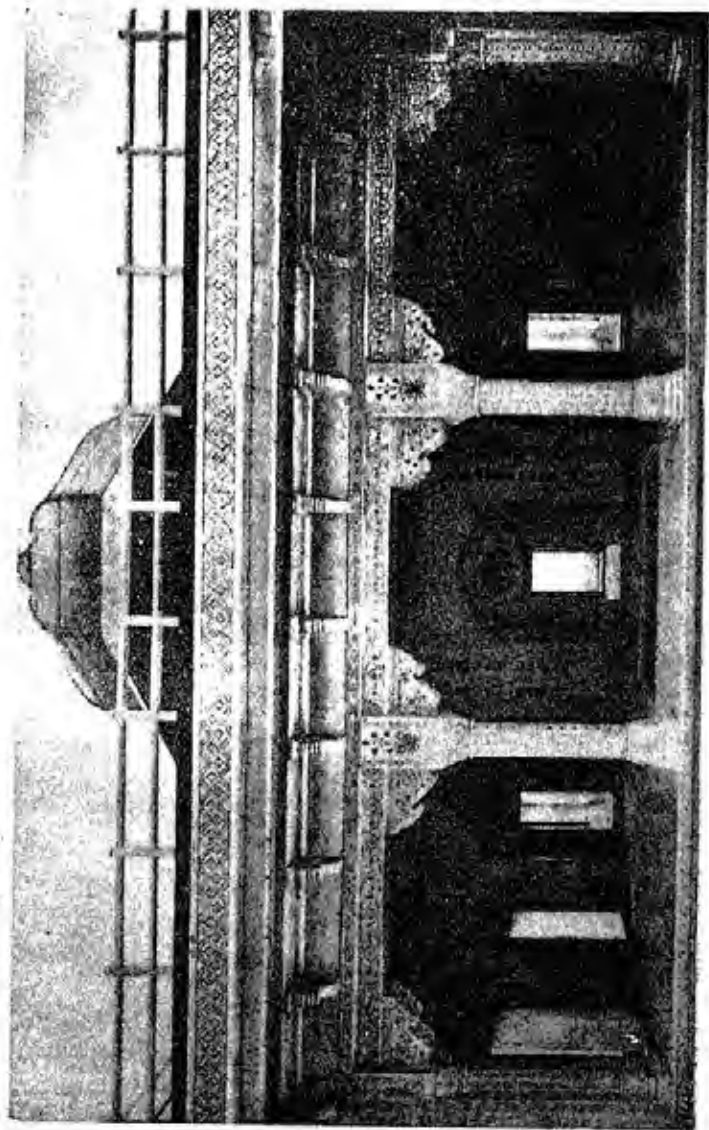
Anguri Bagh

The Anguri Bagh is just in front of the Khas-Mahal, with green shrubs and roses and other flowers. A small passage to the north of Anguri Bagh, leads to the chief female apartment, the Shish Mahal, or the palace of Mirrors. It is a glazed mansion and the walls appear just like a mirror as they have been so accurately and nicely constructed that the reflection caused by the light of the north-end gives ample reflection and creates a light from within.

Samman Burj

It is an octagonal tower, the residence of the chief princess. It was built by Shahjahan who breathed his last here, his eyes turned towards the glittering mausoleum of his wife. This mansion is built of pure marble most beautifully carved

Sannan Burj





and inlaid. In the midst is a neat reservoir of marble in the shape of a rose, which served as a basin for washing the face of Arjumand Bano Begum, the King's favourite wife and the lady of the Taj. This rose-basin was decorated with precious stones, all of which were carried away by the Jats. It was from this tower that the royal ladies witnessed the sight of elephant fight while the King sat on the marble throne opposite.

Moti Masjid

To the north of Diwan-i-Am, on an elevated plateau, there stands a most elegant, fascinating and sublime mosque of white marble called the Pearl Mosque. This mosque is regarded as the gem of mosques. It is one of the purest, loveliest and elegant in its style. It combines exquisite simplicity and refined taste. It is one of the prettiest buildings in the Fort. It makes no pretensions to architectural effect on the outside, but when once you enter by the eastern gate-way, the effect of its courtyard is surprisingly beautiful. The mosque is built of white marble and its three lovely domes with their gilded spires give it a truly grand appearance. In the words of Mr. Taylor, "In all distant views of the fort these domes are seen like silvery bubbles which have rested a moment on its walls and which the next breeze may sweep away." It looks like a halo of light in the fort, spreading its beams throughout. Though not as massive as the colossal Juma Masjid of

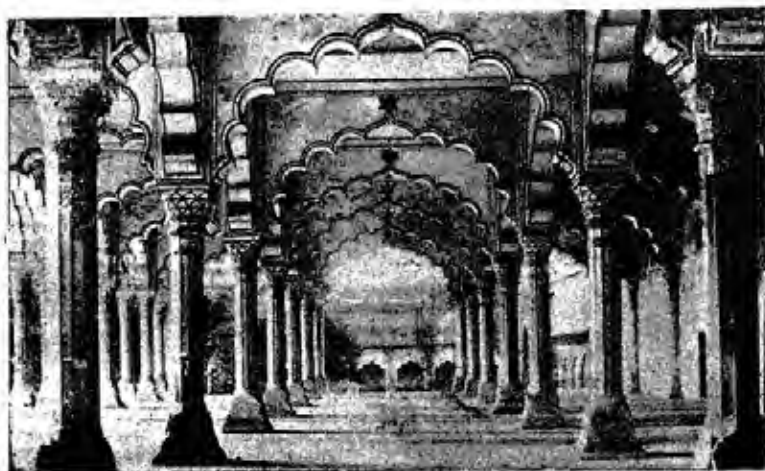
Delhi, yet it gives, so to speak, an appearance of the feminine in style. Mathematically perfectly accurate it surpasses even the Taj in this respect. Some writer remarks "No place is more fitted to inspire men with deeper religious culture than this spotless mosque." Further, the writer says, "It is the purest object yet dedicated by the vanity of men to the worship of the Almighty." The building of the mosque commenced in 1556-57 and took seven years for its completion. It was built during the 26th year of Shahjahan's reign and cost about three lakhs.

Nagina Masjid

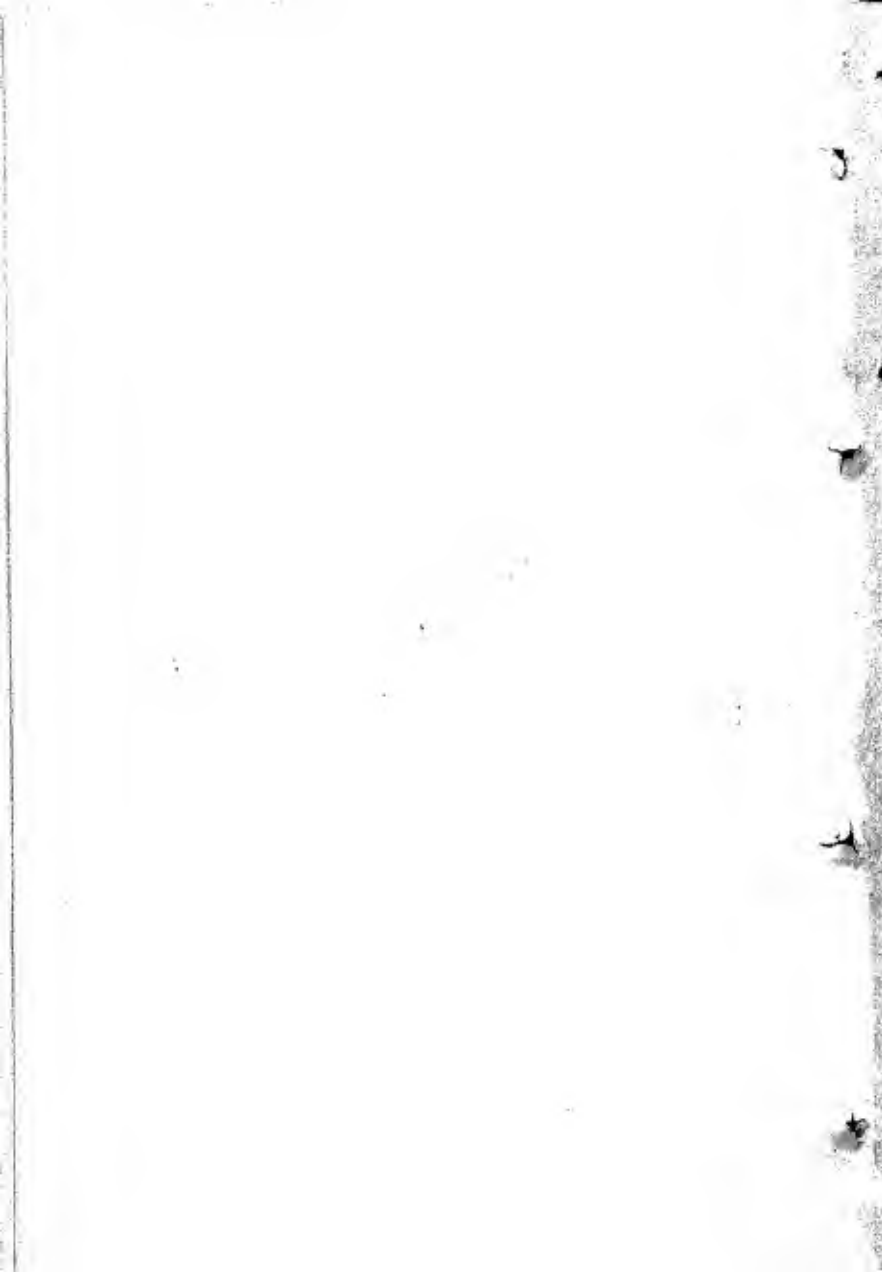
This is a very handsome mosque situated on the northwest corner of Machhi Bhawan, built by Aurangzeb, specially for the ladies of the Harem. Being built of entirely white marble it is regarded as a miniature of the Moti Masjid. Connected with the mosque is a set of chambers which was the place of confinement of Shahjahan by his son, Aurangzeb. The old King used to spend his time in prayers and had no consolation in this solitary chamber except the sight of the famous Taj, built by him for his beloved Mumtaz.

Jehangiri Mahal

Another notable building in the fort is Jehangiri Mahal, a massive building in red stone. It is a two-storeyed building, most elegantly carved and inlaid with relieving line of white marble.



Interior of Moti Masjid



The most wonderful thing is the underground chambers, descent to which is obtained by wooden stairs to the south of Khas Mahal. In these chambers the Emperor and his Harems, found shelter from the burning heat of the sun. A fountain of water played and made the atmosphere cool and refreshing. Here, the royal party was very often entertained to music and dance. According to Al-lami-Abul Fazal's version the Fort was built by Akbar at a cost of seven crores* of Tankas under the superintendence of Qasim Khan, the Lord of the Admiralty, and 3000 to 4000 masons and artisans were employed daily on the work, who took eight years to complete it.

* The cost of building cannot be even roughly estimated, as the entire resources of the vassal chiefs and their states were freely placed at the disposal of the Emperor.

The Taj

The world famous Taj, the jewel and glory of Indian architecture and one of the seven wonders of the world stands lonely and solitarily on the bank of the Jumna, but as grand as ever. Unspoilt by the change of time, it still retains its old charm and hundreds of its devotees regularly pay homage to the shrine of Mumtaz and Shahjahan, whose remains it has so resolutely and faithfully guarded for centuries together. No building in India, has been so often drawn and photographed as the Taj, but with all this it is almost impossible to convey an idea of it to those who have not seen it, not only because of the beauty and extreme delicacy in its structure, but even for the complexity of its design. It is more than a mile from the Red Fort of Akbar, and in this intervening space, during the Moghal regime, there were rows of beautiful buildings and garden-houses of the nobility and Umras of the Empire. Regular bazars were held and the rarities of the world were exhibited and sold, but alas, nothing now remains of them except the huge mounds and shapeless masses of earth.

Before dealing with the main Taj, and its surrounding buildings, it seems more imperative, and befitting to describe the history of Arjumand Banu Begam, or Mumtaz Mahal, to commemorate whose memory this unique edifice was planned.

Mumtaz Mahal, was the daughter of Mirza Abul Hasan Asif Jah, the brother of Nurjahan and son of Mirza Ghias Beg, Prime Minister of Jahangir. She was thus a niece to the famous Nurjahan. She was born in 1003 A.H. (1594.A.D.) Her father and grandfather took sufficient pains to acquaint her with all branches of education suited to her status in life. Her fascinating beauty and charming manners coupled with her accomplishments went even beyond the confines of the Harem, and Jahangir had the lady betrothed to his son Shahjahan in 1607, and five years later the nuptials were celebrated, the bridegroom being nearly 21 years, and the bride having just passed her 18th year. Jehangir attended the ceremony in person, and had the pleasure of tying the bridal wreath of pearls to the turban of the bridegroom, and conferred the title of Mumtazmahal, on the bride. It should be remembered that Shahjahan had already been married to Khandhari Begam, the daughter of Muzaffar Husain Mirza, the grandson of Shah Ismail Shafwi, the King of Persia. The result of this union was Purnumar Bano Begam. Shahjahan, five years after his marriage with Mumtazmahal, again married the grand-daughter of Abdur Rahman Khan-Khana, out of some policy.

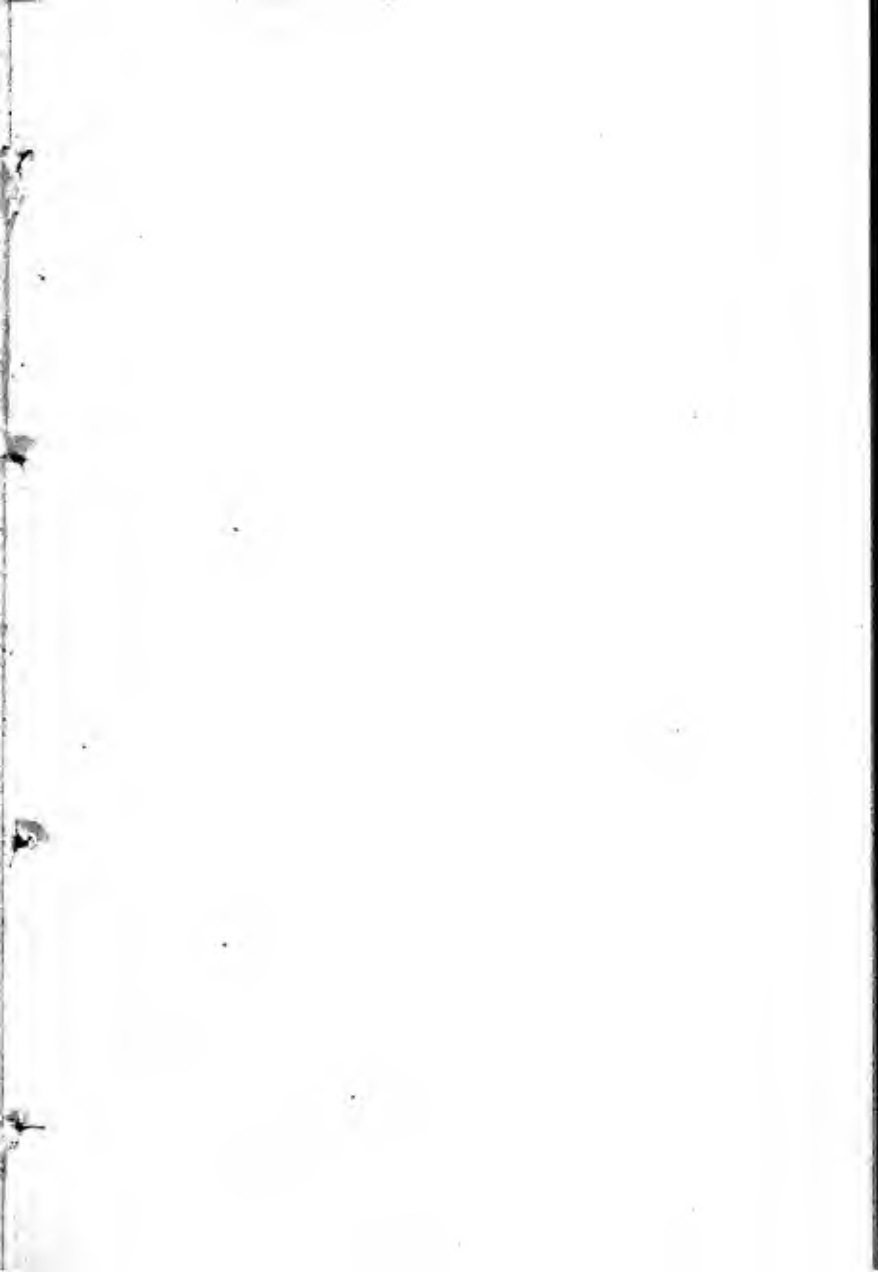
1594
1003
591

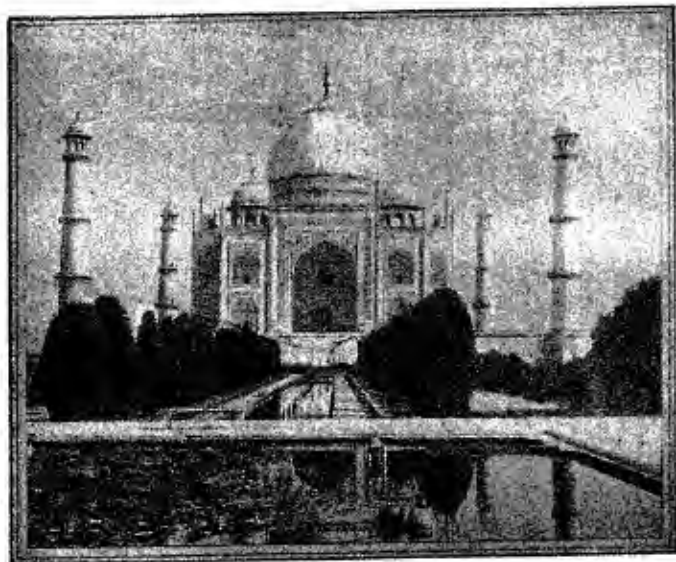
Notwithstanding the marriages, the Emperor was so much attached to Mumtaz, that she was his constant companion even in military expeditions in the remotest parts of the Empire. It can be said

with authority that the other two royal consorts were always treated with respect and regard, but none was equal to Mumtaz, as she was all in all to Shahjahan, who remained passionately devoted to her till his death.

It is a curious coincidence of facts that both Nurjehan and Mumtaz Mahal, (the aunt and neice) were able to captivate their royal lovers by their unsurpassed charms, mental gifts and personal beauty. Both had the upper hand in shaping the destinies of the Moghal Empire. Both contributed materially towards the success of various military campaigns of their lords. It cannot be denied that Nurjehan was supreme in political diplomacy and state strategem, and for sometime actually managed the state-affairs and that Jehangir was a puppet in her hands. Mumtaz, tender-hearted by nature, secured royal pardon for many a man sentenced to death, and her purse was always open to the orphan and the poor of the Empire. Philanthropic by disposition, she was always held in high esteem and love by the populace.

Shahjahan had fourteen children by Mumtaz Mahal, of whom eight were sons and six daughters, and it was while giving birth to her last child that the Empress died in 1630 A.D. The authors of *Badshahanama*, and *Amali Saleh*, have furnished touching particulars of the last moments of Mumtaz Mahal. Her Majesty during the time of delivery became suddenly ill and owing to





The Taj

some internal disorder she contracted fainting fits. Finding her end was nearing, she asked her pet-child Princess Jahanara, to call the King to her from the adjoining parlour. The King hastened to the Queen's apartment and seated himself by her bed. Mumtazmahal looked towards the King with despair and tears in her eyes. The last look to her life-long lover at such a moment filled the King with great grief, and he could not utter a word but looked pale as if the very life was ebbing out of his body. The dying queen could only say, "Take good care of my children and my father and mother when I am no more". Then she breathed her last casting a deep look around her and fixing her eyes at Shahjahan. Alas, she died at the age of thirty-nine years four months and four days only. The poet Bebadal Khan recorded the date of her death in hemistich:

جائے ممتاز محل جنت باد

"May paradise be the abode of Mumtazmahal"
(1630. A. D.) 1040. A.H.

The country lamented her loss and the entire Court went into mourning. His Majesty put on white robes, and the princess royal, the grandees of the realm and the State officials dressed themselves in mourning costumes. The remains of the Queen, were temporarily deposited in the garden of Zenabad, near the Tapti river, in Burhanpur, where the King was then encamped. The sad catastrophe affected the King so much that for weeks he

lived in perfect seclusion. He refused to see any body and did not appear at the *Jharoka*. For two years he totally abstained from all pleasures and often said "Had the burden of the Empire not lain on my shoulders and the "Shara" had not strictly forbidden demonstration of sorrow on the death of any one, I would have resigned the Empire" On the Id festivals and other festivals when the ladies of the Harem assembled, the Emperor missing his beloved wife among them, could not help shedding tears, and always burst into tears when he had any occasion to visit the parlour of the deceased Mumtaz. The grief affected the health of the King and his hair turned grey prematurely.

"His hair was grey but not with years,
Nor grew they white in a single night,
As men's would grow from sudden fear,
Ah cankerous grief his heart did blight.

Shahjahan kept his words which he had pledged to the dying Queen. Jahanara Begham was always treated with great regard and affection and the household was entrusted to her charge and she became the custodian of the Royal Seal, as well as her mother's allowance of six lacs, with an addition of four lacs was transferred to her. Of the jewels, ornaments and other precious metals, valued more than a crore, half of it was given to Jahan-ara, and the other half to other children.

Six months after this melancholy event, on Friday 1631, A.D., the mortal remains of the Empress were sent to Agra, the Darul-Khilafat, under charge of Prince Mohammad Shah Shuja Bahadur, the head of the royal Household. Under orders from the Emperor, food and silver coins were distributed to the poor and the needy, all the way from Burhanpur to Agra, the last resting place of the Empress.

The site selected for the mausoleum was originally a palace of Raja Man Singh, and his successor, Raja Jai Singh, was asked to give the place in exchange for a lofty edifice, from the Khalsa Estate, and this spot was used for the Mausoleum of the deceased Empress. Here, the internment took place on 15th Jamadi-ul-Sani, 1041, A.H., At first a temporary tomb was constructed but under orders from the Emperor the present Taj, was built which to this day remains the wonder of the world.

Various reasons have been assigned by the historians for the building of this mausoleum, but nevertheless it is beyond doubt that it was the first of the buildings erected by the Emperor, while at the zenith of his power, and under the influence of his tender passion for Mumtaz; and at a time when the Imperial coffers were full of silver, and gold and the subjects were prosperous. Complete peace and tranquillity prevailed everywhere in the country. Hindustan was "Janat Nishan" in the true sense of the word.

Shahjahan invited at his court, for the construction of this unrivalled specimen of the Moghal architecture, all the eminent architects, artists and masons, available in his dominion, as well as, from foreign countries, such as Persia, Arabia and Turkey. The master mason was Mohammad Hanif of Baghdad. The chief architect was Mohammad Isa Afandi, the designer; Amanat Khan Shirazi, Tughra writer, Ismail Khan, the domemaker (Turkey), Mohammad Khan, the Caligrapher (Shiraz) Kazim Khan, Kalas Maker (Lahore), Mohan Lal, Manohar Singh, mosaicists (Lahore) were some of the important artisans who constructed the Taj and were lavishly and highly paid. In the year 1630 commenced the building of the Mausoleum, under the Superintendence of Makramat Khan and Mir Abdul Karim as designed by the ingenious Afandi.

There has been a great controversy as to the original designer of the plan. Some European historians ascribe it to an Italian, Geronimo Veronco, and give him the credit of planning the Taj. Tradition also states that a French artist named Austin-de Bordeaux, who certainly was responsible for some of the decorations of the fort, was employed. But the authority is questionable for various reasons. The European historians base their arguments on the strength of a statement by Father Manrique of Spain, who visited Agra in 1641. Marnique, too bases his information on certain facts given by one Father De Castro of

Lahore, which was that Veronco had died at Lahore, in 1640 while the building was in progress. It is said that the Venetian came to India in a Portuguese ship and it could hardly be imagined that such a genius as the designer of the Taj, was a type of adventurer, who came in the 17th century, and entered into the service of the Great Moghal. It is also surprising that the famous travellers, Tavernier, and Bernier have not mentioned anything about Veronco, although they declare : "This superb monument is sufficient to show that the Indians are not ignorant of architecture, and though the style may appear curious to Europeans, it is in good taste, and though it is different from Greek or other ancient art, one can only say that it is very fine". The *Bulshah Nama* (the History of Shahjahan's Reign) does not make any reference to any European workman or designer, although it mentioned many Asiatic artists and artisans. But apart from this, the style, the plan and the form of the Mausoleum are entirely Saracenic and Eastern, and can never be claimed to have been designed by a Venetian to whom the idea must be quite foreign. It may be claimed that centuries before the execution of the Taj, the mosaic art was invented and brought to perfection in the Islamic world. Even France was unacquainted with this art at a period when it flourished in Persia, Egypt, Syria, Baghdad, Damascus, Sicily and Spain. In short the whole idea of the Taj was undoubtedly the conception of the Mohammadan.

and most of the great artists of the Islamic world came to Hindustan during the reigns of Akbar and Shahjahan at a time when this art was waning with the decline of Islamic Kingdoms in other parts of Asia. India was also thoroughly acquainted with mosaic and inlaid marble decoration. The mosque of Fatehpur Sikri, Sikandra, and Itmaduddaula, which were built before the Taj, are also inlaid with mosaic work and thus it tends to show that the art was practised in Agra long before the Taj was built. Therefore it can be authentically stated that the designer of the Taj was not an Italian or French, but of India and the East. The theory propounded by the Europeans is baseless.

We now come to the description of the Taj itself. The entrance is through a beautiful gateway, opening into a spacious quadrangle surrounded by arcaded rooms of solid masonry adorned by four gateways on each side. This is the caravan-sarai where the travellers and the poor were accommodated and entertained at state expense. Passing over a broad stone pavement, you enter a grand gateway of red stone most elaborately carved and inscribed with verses from the Holy Quran. It consists of a lofty central arch with wings in two storeys on either side. Within the archway is a large octagonal chamber. The gateway opens on to a spacious quadrangle, 1,860 feet from east to west and 1,000 feet from north to South, surrounded by a high

wall of red sand-stone with turrets at the angles and a gateway on either side. A straight pathway of white marble runs down the centre on each side of a long and shallow reservoir, while on either hand is an avenue of cypress trees recently planted to replace the old ones which stood formerly. The path terminates in a double flight of steps leading to the marble platform 4 feet high from which arises a second platform 22½ feet above the garden level and on this stands the lovely and grand Taj. On reaching the terrace or platform one is lost in admiration at the beauty and magnificence which surrounds the structure. At every turn a new beauty is discovered. The chequered pavement of black and white marble forming a mosaic of great neatness and beauty is surrounded on all sides by a low parapet 2 feet high. At each corner of the terrace stands a circular minaret of most exquisite proportions built of white marble with three galleries and an open cupola supported on eight elegant pillars. In the centre of the platform stands the Mausoleum, a square of 186 feet, encircled by a number of turrets. From the centre springs the principal dome 38 feet in diameter and 80 feet in height, surrounded by gild-crescent, about 260 feet from the ground level. The upper terrace round the spring of the dome is protected by a higher parapet of about 6 feet, each angle being surrounded by cupolas supported on tender pillars of marble.

The sides of the central octagonal room about 60 feet in diameter face the four cardinal points and certain entrances, each about 130 feet long. There were suits of rooms all round, eight in number, having access to the central apartment. The Mullahs constantly recited the Holy Quran for the benediction of the departed souls of the royal pair. The elliptic arches forming the doors are each 18 ft. high and above each is an elliptic window. The grand entrance is formed of a single arch rising nearly to the cornice. The entrance and the arches from the top to the basement, the dome and the galleries of the minarets, are profusely decorated with flowers of the various patterns and inlaid with beautiful ornamental designs in marble of various colours especially pale, brown, red and violet. The arches and walls are decked with passages from Holy Quran in large *Tugra* letters of black marble laid into the white marble ground with so much skill and exactness that the surface is quite smooth, although the work is purely in-lay. Each letter is about a foot in length and they are so precisely and intelligently inserted that they appear alike from far and near; and the symmetry of the arch is so accurately maintained that it keeps the vision in tact and the *Tugra* letters appear just of the same size at the front as at the top. Fergusson says; "The light in the central apartment is admitted only through double screens of white marble trellis-work of the most exquisite design,

one on the outer and one on the inner face of the wall. In our climate this would produce nearly darkness; but in India, and in a building composed of white marble, this was required to temper the glare that otherwise would have been intolerable. As it is, no words can express the charmed beauty of that central chamber, seen in the soft gloom of the subdued light, that reaches it through the distant and half-closed opening that surrounds it. When used as a Baradari, or pleasure palace, it must always have been the coolest and loveliest of garden retreats, and now that it is sacred to the dead, it is the most graceful and the most impressive of the sculptures in the world". The screens referred to are profusely decorated, with a wainscoting of sculptured tablets, having flowers of various patterns.

In the grand Hall, under the principal dome, there stands the false tomb of Mumtaz Mahal in the centre, and that of Shahjahan close by, a little raised. The real tombs are in a low vault placed exactly underneath those in the hall above. The tombs are sarcophagi of purest marble exquisitely carved profusely inlaid with agnate, bloodstone, lapislazuli, cornelian and other polychoured and precious stones, and gems which have been embeded in the white marble ground work with great dexterity and exactness. The admirable peculiarity of the burial hall can best be seen in the arches and the walls. Everything there is so fresh and bright as if it was

finished but yesterday. Most of the flowers are carved with such exactness and accuracy that within a space of an inch they comprise fifty or sixty varieties of stones of different colours. With such a nice finish and delicacy of execution are they blended together that they produce the appearance of natural flowers. It is only with the aid of a microscope that they can be distinguished. The screen surrounding the cenotaphs is eight feet high and carved out of solid blocks of white marble. There is here a representation of a leaf like that of the *Neem* tree, a whitish stock dividing the blades into two parts. The ribs and veins and the end of the tooth-edges are all of the same colour. According to the *Badshahnama*, a gold railing was fixed to protect the tomb, but it was removed for fear of theft, and was subsequently replaced by a marble enclosure which is seen to this day. The following is the inscription on the tomb of Shahjahan.

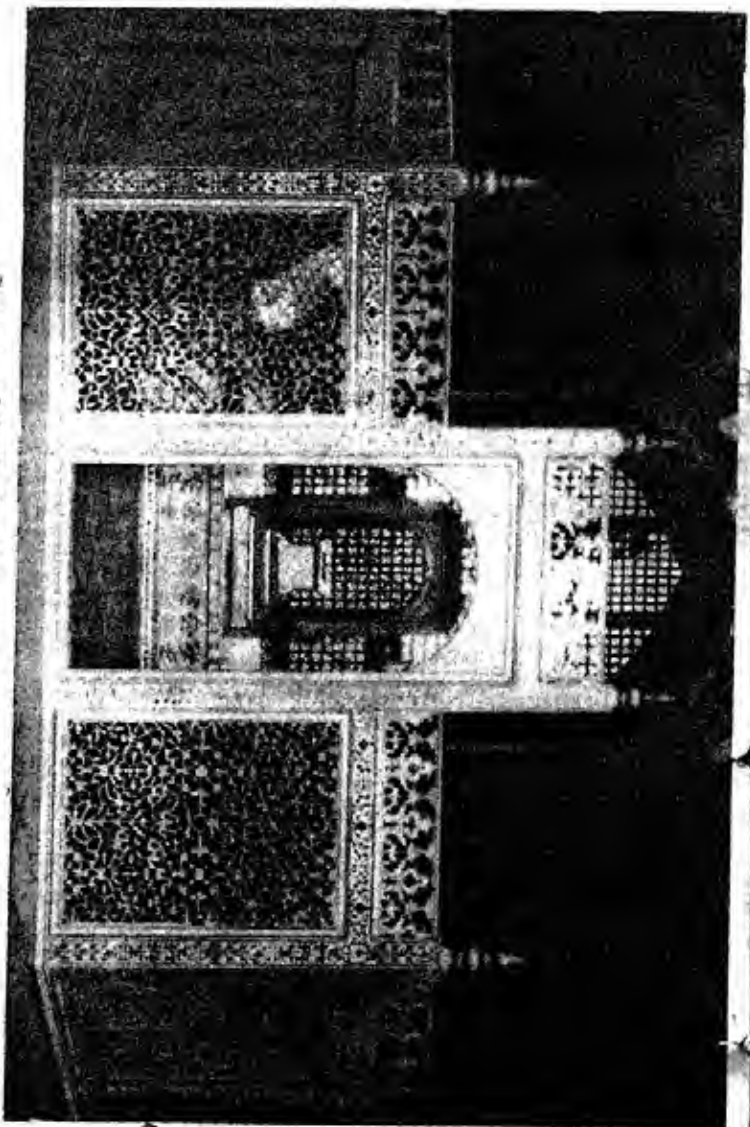
مرقد منور و مشجع مطهر بادشاه رضوان دستکاه خلد آرامگاه
اعلیٰ حضرت علین مکنی فروروش آشیانی صاحبقران ثانی شاهجهان
بادشاه غازی طالب ثراة و جمال التختیه ماثواه درشب هشت و ششم
شهر رجب سنه هزار و هفتاد و شش هجری ازجهان فانی به برگاه
جاودانی انتقال کردند-

The illuminated sepulchre and sacred resting place of His most exalted Majesty, dignified as Razwan,¹ having his abode in Paradise and his dwelling in the starry heaven,

1. Razwan, the guardian of Paradise.



Screen round the Tombs of Mumtazmahal and Shahjehan.



dweller in the regions of bliss, the second Lord of Constellation, Shah Jahan, the King Valiant, may his mausoleum ever flourish, and may his abode be in the heavens. He travelled from this transitory world to the world of eternity on the night of 28th of the month of Rajab 1076 A. H. (1665 A. D.).

The following is the inscription on the tomb of Mumtaz Mahal.

مرقد منور ارجمند بانو بیگم مخاطب بممتاز محل تو قشت
 قیامه سنه ۱۰۴۰ -

The illuminated sepulchre of Arjumand Bano Begum, entitled Mumtaz Mahal, Died in 1040 A. H. (1630 A. D. or 36 years before the Kings death).

Above the Sacrophagus are inscribed the 99 names of God, and on the head is the inscription :

القیوم القانوتا

Here is the ever lasting. He is sufficient.

On one side is inscribed المقربون الذین قالوا ربنا الله

Nearer unto God are these who say: Our Lord is God.

The following passage from the Holi Quran is also inscribed.

هو الله الذی لا اله هو عالم الغیب و اشهادة هو الرحمن الرحیم

God is He beside whom there is no God. He knoweth what is concealed and what is manifest. He is merciful and compassionate.

The tombs were adorned with precious gems. Shahjahan's tomb-stone was brightened

with large diamonds of great value, but those are no more. Cruel vandals could not resist the temptation and took them away. On either side of the Taj at a distance of about 100 yards stand two identical buildings. That to the west, a large mosque of red sand-stone with three domes inlaid with white marble, while the other to the east which is precisely similar was intended as a counter-part of the other so as to preserve the symmetry of the group. This is known as *Jamat Khana*, or the place of assemblage. In an enclosure beneath the true mosque is pointed out the place where the embalmed body of the Empress was deposited, while the Mausoleum was in the course of construction. Exactly opposite the Taj on the other bank of the Jumna, are the ruins of an old foundation. Shahjahan, it is said, had intended to build a monument for himself, corresponding to the Taj, but his subsequent captivity prevented the execution of the design. When he died his austere son Aurangzeb buried him by the side of his wife, observing: "My father entertained a great affection for my mother, so his last resting place be close to hers". In the words of Mr. Taylor: "Fate conceded to Love what was denied to vanity".

The sight of the Taj by moonlight is most fascinating. The whole structure appears to sparkle like a diamond in the bright slanting rays, and the pure marble white-dome looks like a brilliant

pearl on a silvery plate. The decorations on the marble walls seem like so many jewels set on an ornament. In short the edifice has certain peculiar charm of its own, which reveals only to those with keen perception. The echo in the interior dome is remarkably sonorous and awe-inspiring.

Ever since the Taj was built it has been the subject of so much admiration on the part of the writers and traveller of various countries and nationalities, that it can be said without fear of contradiction that it is a most unique building of its kind. Human taste and human ideas always differ. Yet the historians and poets of the East and the West have always been united in eulogizing its splendour as the most magnificent architectural monument ever raised by the vanity of man. It may be more interesting to know the opinion of the founder of the edifice himself. The eloquent poems of Shahjehan's composition in praise of the Taj are reproduced from *Badshaha Nama* of Mulla Abdul Hamid of Lahore, showing passionate love for his departed wife and also of his pride and ostentation :—

ابیات مصنفہ شاہجہان

زہی مرقد پاک بلقیس عہد - کہ بانوی آفاق را گشت مہد
 منور مقامی چو باغ بہشت - معطر چو نردس غبر سرشت
 بصفہش ز خال - معطر بنور - بجاروب مژگان دوش رنکہ حور
 جواہر نگارست دیوارودر - ہوا نازہ و تر چو آب گہر
 عمارت گر این مقدس جناب - ز سر چشم تیض آوردہ آب
 برین بقعہ پاک والا مقام - ترشح کنا ابر رحمت مدام

اگر معجزم آرد بزمین در پناه - شود همچو مغفور پاک از گناه
 اگر عاصی آرد بزمین در صفت روی - کند نامه خویشتن را شست و شوی
 ز وقت بمظاره این مزار - شود چشم خورشید و مه اشکبار
 نمود این عمارت بنا روزگار - که ظاهر شود قدرت کردگار

How excellent the sepulchre of the lady of Bilqī's fame
 That a cradle from the body of the Princess of the world
 became.

Like the garden of heaven a brilliant spot.
 Full of fragrance like paradise fraught with ambergris
 In the breadth of its court perfumes from the nose-gay of
 sweet-heart rise,
 The nymphs of paradise use their eye-lids for cleaning its
 threshold.

Its walls and gates glitter with gems.
 The air is there fresh and delightful like the brilliancy
 of pearl.

The architect of this sacred edifice
 Brought water for it from the fountain of grace.
 On this sacred edifice of high renown
 Showers of mercy are ever pouring.
 Should guilty seek asylum here,
 Like one pardoned, he becomes free from sin.
 Should a sinner make his way to this mansion,
 All his past sins are sure to be washed away.
 The sight of this mansion creates sorrowing sight
 And makes sun and moon shed tears from their eyes.
 In this world this edifice has been made
 To display thereby the Creator's glory.

Shahjehan has used figurative language in praising this edifice of his own creation in hyperbolic style according to the fashion of the time, expressing warmth of his heart and his idea of the greatness of the Mausoleum, which he has left to posterity a glorious and permanent gift to his splendid Empire and India. We cannot, however, genuinely appreciate the true pleasure and consolation which Shahjehan would have felt after the completion of Taj. Suffice it to say in the words of a writer "It is too pure, too holy to be the work of human hands, angels must have wrought it from heaven and a glass case should be thrown over it to preserve it from the breath of the air". A Russian artist describes it: "a lovely woman abuse her as you please, but the moment you come into her presence, you submit to its fascination". It will be no exaggeration to say that no daughter of Eve had ever such a grand Mausoleum on her tomb as the Taj and most of the renowned and beautiful ladies would die even tomorrow to have such another over them as observed Mrs. Sleeman when she was asked how she liked Taj.

The parting scene after one's visit to Taj is always pathetic, as the severance from a spot made so lovely by art and so rich and attractive by memories must be strikingly painful. Successive visits to Taj never fail to afford the same degree of pleasure, and while your attention may be

engrossed less and less in smaller objects, yet the pleasure which you derive from the contemplation of the greatness of the entire building collectively increases, and you always leave it with a feeling of regret and with an assurance that the image which you have seen and the impression which you have formed can never be obliterated from the mind while memory holds her seat.

The following observation of Mrs. C. Fagan, the wife of Col. C. Fagan, Adjutant-General under Lord Combermere, will be of some interest :—

Pure as Mumtaza's spotless fame,
The unsullied marble shines ;
Rich as her lord's unrivalled love,
The wreathes that deck their shrines.

On fanes more glorious I have gazed,
Witness St. Peter's dome,
And costlier gems shine bright around
The medician tomb

But this Love's temple-beauteous pile,
The pride of Eastern art,
This boasts the present deity,
That seizes on the heart.

All ruling Power I to thee we bend,
Thy potent charm we own,
This structure, simple, graceful pure,
Oh ! this is Love's alone !

We have now spoken of the monument at length and now we shall deal with the expenditure incurred in the erection of several structures referred to above. According to a reliable manuscript a detailed account of the expenses have been entered by the treasurer Rudra Dass. The grand total comes to nearly¹ thirty crores of rupees which includes the expense incurred over other buildings. According to *Badshahnamu* the building of the Taj was constructed at a cost of 15 crores of rupees. The inccriptions tell us that it took not less than 20 years to complete the whole edifice. It should be noted that ample provision was made for its maintenance by the income of about a lakh of rupees derived from the revenue of Pargana Havala and of an equal amount from the shops, street and Sarais.

The first Urs of Mumtazmahal

The Urs, i. e. the commemoration of the death ceremony was performed by Shahjahan for the first time in 1041. A. H. (1631. A. D.) All the princes, courtiers and the nobles of the empire attended. It was held with uncommon enthusiasm. Theologians, mystics and those who could repeat the Holy Quran by heart, were invited.

1. It is not possible to give the exact cost of building as the entire resources of the state and the Jagirdars and Ruling chiefs were put at the command of the Emperor free who utilised them to the full.

Prayers were offered for the benefit of the soul of the deceased. Arrangements of the seats were made according to the respective ranks. The ceremony of Fateha, was performed and a sumptuous dinner consisting of many varieties of dishes was served before the guests assembled. His Majesty supervised the ceremony in person and Yaminuddaula Asif Khan, the father of the lamented queen, was assigned a prominent place to watch the ceremony. Out of a lakh of rupees sanctioned for the occasion, Rs. 50,000 were given in alms and the remaining Rs. 50,000 were distributed on the following day. The ceremony of the *Urs* not only continued during Shahjahan's reign, but his successors also performed it, only the expenses were curtailed.

At the present the only public functions that are permissible are on the occasion of Mohammdan Festivals of *Idul Fitr*-*Iduzuha* and *Shabe-Barat* or those of Hindus, *Dashehara* and *Diwali* and the annual flower show in March.

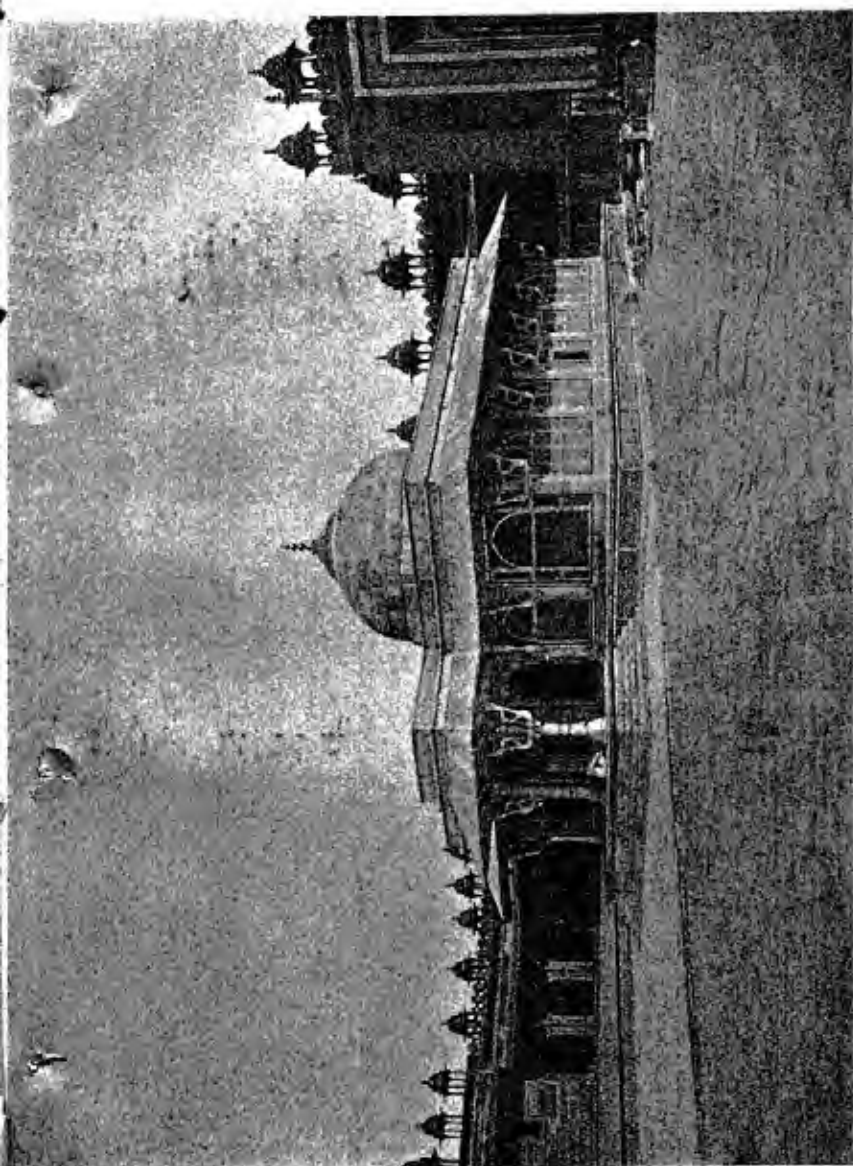
Fatehpur Sikri

Fatehpur Sikri, once the Imperial Residence of Akbar the Great, is about 23 miles south-west of Agra. The name Fatehpur or Fatehabad was given by Akbar, after his victories in Gujrat but the place derived its importance owing to its association with Sheikh Salim Chishti. According to *Ain-i-Akbari*, Sikri, a village of Biana, is of considerable antiquity and was occupied about the 14th century by Siharwar Rajputs, who came from Dholepur, and according to one account derived their name from the place. The place became *Darul-Khilafat* and derived its importance from the fact that a great religious Muslim saint, Sheikh Salim Chisti of Sikri, resided here in a cave on the top of a hill. Akbar had many sons born to him but none remained alive at that time, and he approached Sheikh Salim Chisti to seek his spiritual aid and prayer to be blessed with a son. The sheikh said, "The bestower who maketh his gift unsolicited will endow thee with three sons." When the queen was about to be confined, at the suggestion of the Sheikh the Emperor sent her to reside at Sikri, where in the following year Prince Salim, afterwards emperor Jahangir, was born on Wednesday, the 17th Rabi-ul-Awal, 997.A.H. Before the birth of Jehangir, Akbar had also made a vow to perform a pilgrimage on foot from Agra to Ajmer, the shrine of the saint, Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti, one of the greatest Muslim saints in India, whose Mausoleum is at Ajmer.

if blessed with a son, and the Emperor fulfilled it by actually making a journey of 140 miles on foot to pay his homage at the shrine of the Saint.

Fatehpur Sikri is still noted as the seat of one of the grandest group of ancient architectural remains in Upper India. It is now a dead city with ancient buildings and monuments deserted for nearly 300 years but still in a state of perfect preservation. The whole area of the place is some six miles encircled on three sides by massive walls, built of the most substantial material and durable cement. The spacious gateways, one on the north east, known as Delhi Gate, Lal Gate, the Agra Gate on the main road and the Birbal Gate in the Eastern angle, on the south east, Gwalior Gate, on the south west Tehra Gate, and the Ajmer Gate on the western slope. are the first object which catches the travellers' imagination. These gateways closely resemble one another in design, just like the gates of the Jaunpur fort which is also in a dilapidated condition.

From the Naubat Khana, the road continues up to the hill, on the summit of which stands the splendid palace and other buildings. The first building is known as Mint or *Taksal*. To the left of the mint is the *Diwan-Am*. This is very spacious and provides accommodation to the vast multitude who assembled to pay their homage to the Emperor, or present petitions before him. Close by the *Diwan-Am* is another Court room called the record office. The Khas Mahal or the





Emperor's palace and "Khab-gah" the King's sleeping chamber, are of singular beauty and simplicity. It has four doors with suitable inscriptions upon them, revealing the beauty of the place.

فرش ایوان مرا آینه سازد رضوان
 خاک درگاه ترا سرمه کند حور العین
 قصر شامست بهر رنگ به از خلد برین
 سخنی نیست درین باب چه خلد ست برین

The Janitor of Paradise may see his face in thy chamber
 floor,
 The dust of thy court is collyrium for the nymph of paradise.
 The palace of the king is in every respect better than
 sublime paradise
 It is beyond question, what is heaven compared to it ?

The palace of the Istamboli Begum, the Emperor's Turkish wife, comprises specimens of the most elaborate carving, representing highly imaginative scenes from nature viz., forest scenery, mountains, birds, wild beasts, etc. The outside pillars require special attention having fine carving of flowers and trees.

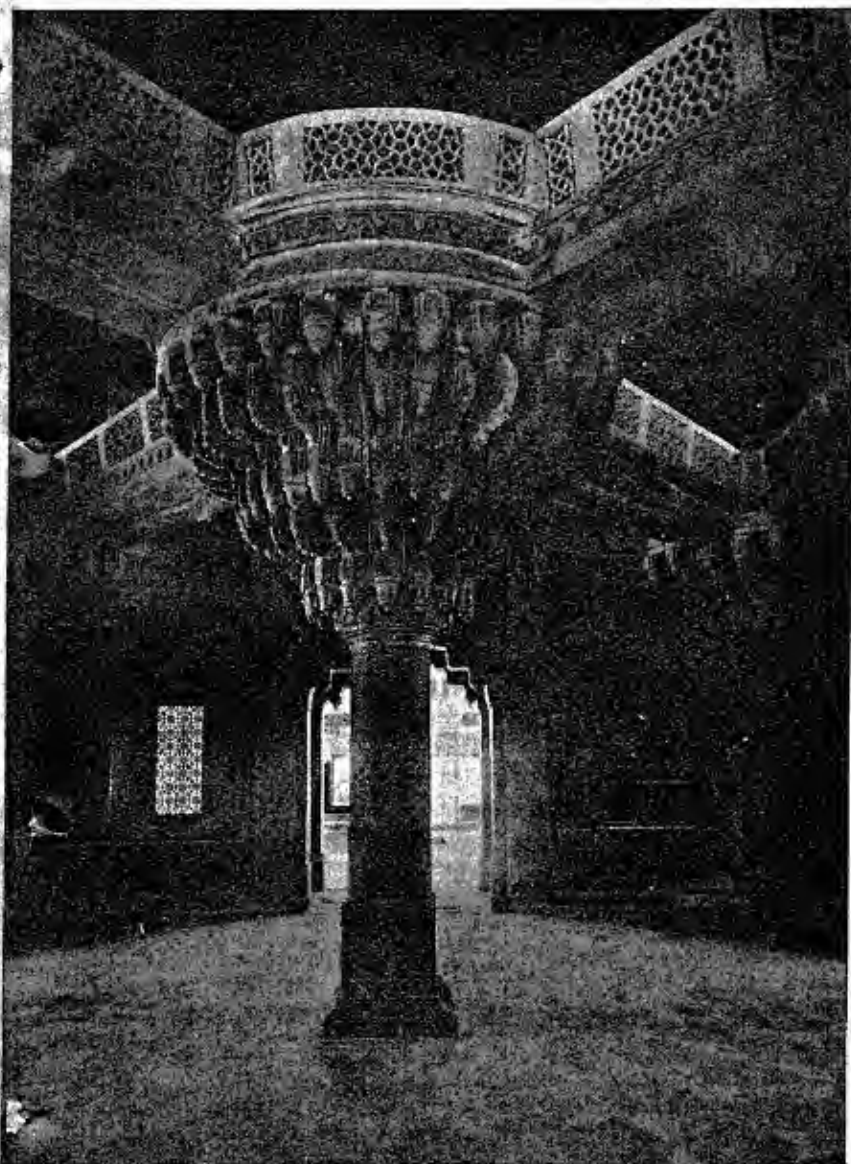
Sonehri manzil

The Sonehri Manzil is situated to the right of the Emperor's palace. Once embellished with golden ornaments or gilt decorations, it has no lusture and glaze now, but still retains the famous.

scenes of the adventures of *Rustam* and *Sohrab* as depicted by Firdosi in *Shahnama*. The arches and niches over the doors and windows once contained pictures of various characters, but all have now been obliterated, leaving nothing but a shadow of their past grandeur. The chief feature in the Sonehri Manzil is a Greek Cross and the image of the Virgin and an angel, parts of which can even now be traced. It is said that this was the palace of Akbar's Christian wife, one Bibi Mariam.

Dewan-i-Khas

The most beautiful and picturesque building is the Dewan-i-Khas, or Privy Council chamber. It is on the west of the Dewan-i-Am. It appears like a two storied building but in reality, it is one storied, open from the floor to the dome. In the centre there is a massive column richly and elegantly carved, rising to the height of the upper windows and supporting a palisaded octagonal seat. It contains a vast treasure of richest sculpture with four stone causeways, each about 10 feet long, leading to a four side entrances of the pavilion giving access to a quadrant which communicates with the ground floor by a flight of sixteen steps. The circular space at the top of the capital as well as the passages and gallery are fenced with a balustrade of open screen work. This place is associated with Akbar's throne, and the dialogues between Abul-Fazl and Badauni, and discussions on political and



Diwan-i-Khas. Interior view

* Copyright, Archaeological Survey of India.



social subjects with the selected few and elite of the Empire. The windows on the ground floor and small windows in the corner above exhibit most delicate stone-work in perfect geometrical patterns. The beautiful side-gallery in the Dewani-Am was reserved for *Ibadat*, and called 'Ibadat Khana' the house of worship. It was here that men of learning were welcomed and the King was accessible to all. It consisted of four Ewans. Arrangements of seats to Ewans were made according to the ranks and position of the people. The grandees and Amirs of the Empire, the Ulmas, Sufis and philosophers were all assigned respective wings in the Ibadat Khana, and meetings and discussions were usually held here on Fridays. Close by the side of the Privy Chamber is an edifice of curious design and construction called the 'Ankh Micholi', or the hide-and-seek house in which the ladies of the Harem played with the Emperor.

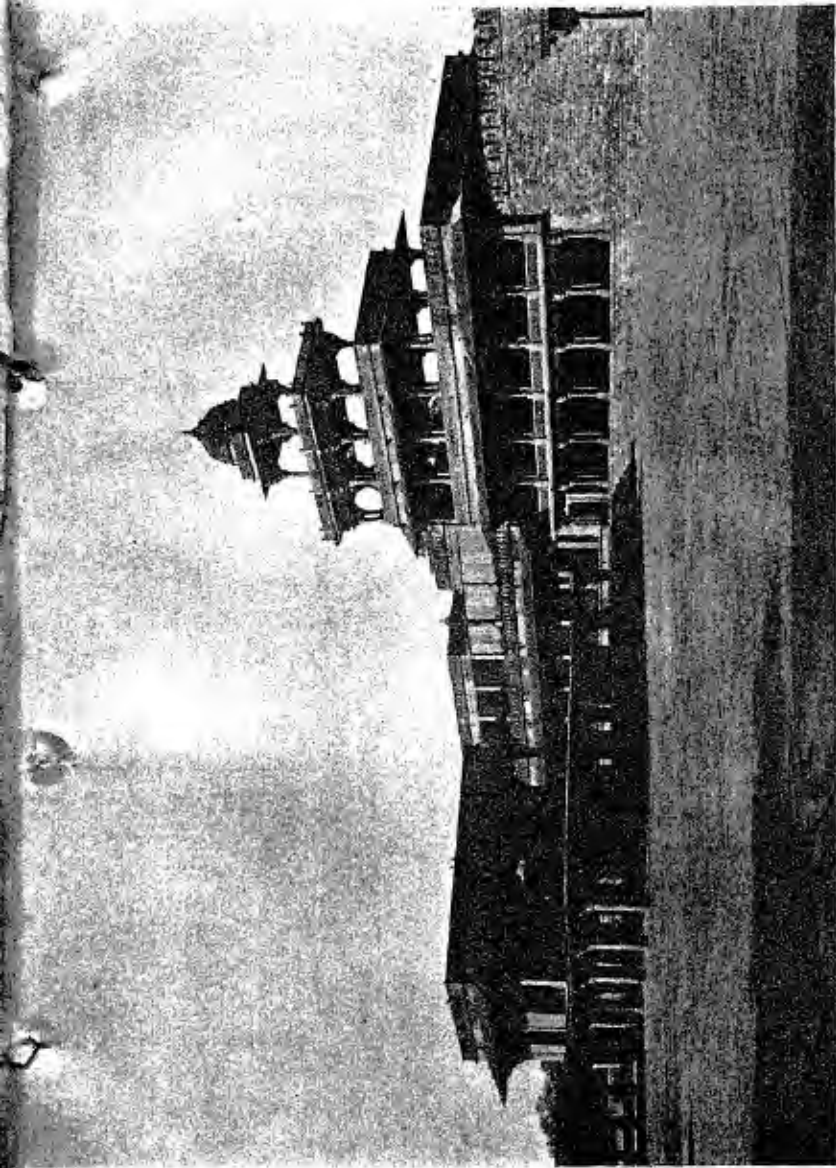
Panj Mahal

It is a huge edifice of pyramidal shape open on all sides. Being a five-storied colonnade with open galleries rising one above the other, supported by rows of carved pillars and each storey successfully lessening in dimension till the uppermost supported by four columns is reached, is a building of curious design and the exact purpose of its construction has not been ascertained. The pillars in the lowest story are fifty-six

in number. The capitals of the pillars exhibit a rare example of sculptures. Statues of elephants standing opposite each other with interlaced trunks, images of men plucking fruits from trees are some of the noteworthy objects of rare sculpture apart from the delicate carving on thin pillars. It is said, the Mahal was intended as the place of recreation and pastime for the Emperor. The Panj Mahal is famous for the exquisite beauty and excellence of design. To the north-west of the Mahal is the Pachisi Board, carved out of stone pavement, having sufficient marked accomodation for each player.

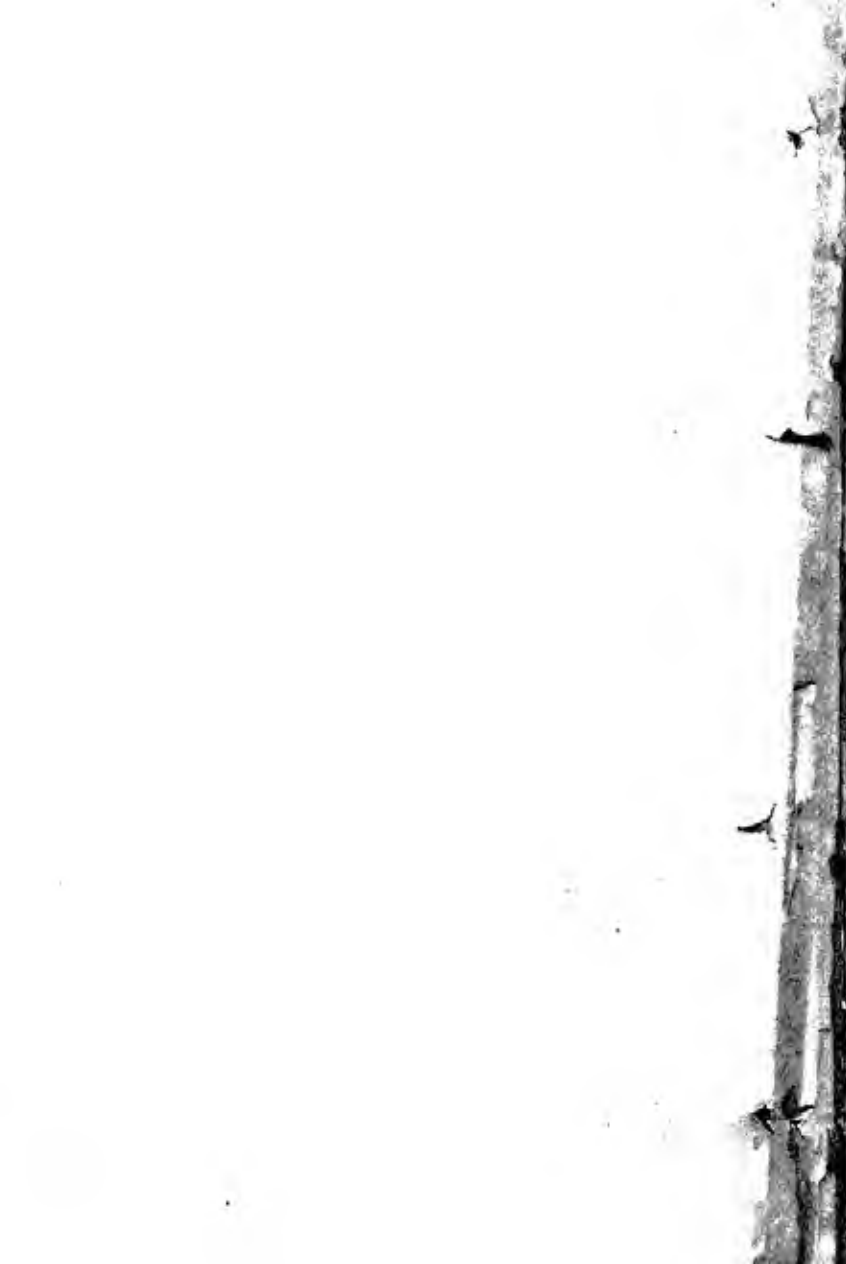
Mausoleum of Sheikh Salim Chisti

The perfect model of excellence and perhaps the chief ornament of the whole building is the shrine of the holy Saint Sheikh Salim Chisti, belief in whose spiritual power led Akbar to found a city and embellish it with palaces, gardens and other buildings. The Sheikh was the son of Sheikh Bahauddin and the suffix of Chisti is assumed after the name of a village in Persia. Being a descendant from the father-side to Sheikh Farid-Uddin Ganj Shaker of Pakpatan, who traced his descent from Farukh Shah, the King of Kabul, his ancestors came from Kabul during the time of *Changeez Khan*, the Tartar conqueror and settled in the town of Kasur in Lahore. The Sheikh always kept fast and went to Mecca several times for Haj Pilgrimage on foot. After



'Caturvraṭ' Archaeological Survey of India.

Darab Mahal - Canaval view - Enormous south wall.



travelling all over India in the garb of a hermit, he came to Sikri, and took his abode in a small hamlet in a desolate forest surrounded by wild hillocks. He lived the life of a recluse and in this solitary cell he passed his days in devotion, making.

"Prayer all his business, all his pleasure praise".

The Sheikh died in 1571 A.D. the Quita-Tarikh which gives the era of his death is:—

دو بین مباح زخود فانی و بتق باقی -

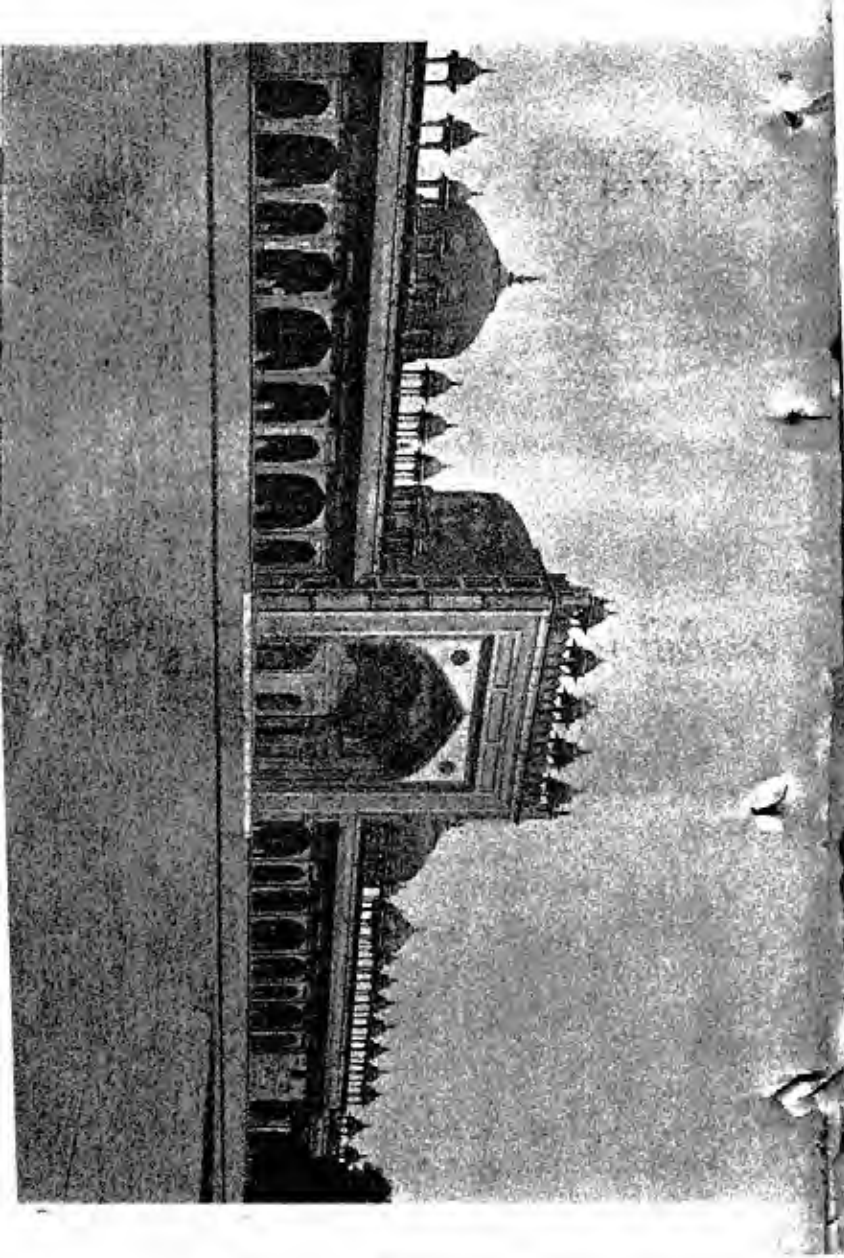
Abstain from polytheism, forget yourself and join the essence of the Everlasting.

This marble mausoleum of Sheikh Salim Chisti, is one of the most renowned buildings in Northern India. It is built on an inlaid marble pattern 3 feet high, 48 feet each way. From this a portico projects on the south side, approached by a broad flight of marble steps from the pavement. Towards the northern angle is the tomb of the Sheikh built of white marble with a dazzling polish and elaborately carved. It is surrounded by a verandah enclosed by screens of white marble, cut in a beautiful variegated shape and design. In the cenotaph chamber, the passage for light being the windows on north, east, and west side, the real tomb being beneath it in the crypt. The floor of the chamber is inlaid with

marble and mosaic of various colours and the walls are covered with beautiful floral paintings and are glazed and veins-coated with redsand stone. Over the tomb is a sort of wooden canopy supported by four slender pillars, each encrusted with fine mother-o'-pearl work carved in various designs. The Porch doors are of ebony wood inlaid with brass. The shrine is held in great veneration both by the Muslims and Hindus alike, and knots or bits of string are usually bound in the bars of the screen by barren women of both the communities as a votive offering for the gift of a son.

The tomb of NAWAB ISLAM KHAN, the grandson of the Sheikh and the Governor of Bengal, is an enormous mausoleum unrivalled among similar buildings for the elegance of its design and delicacy of its execution. It is one of the finest and most perfect specimens of Indian architecture. The chamber containing the tomb is square on the outside, but octagonal within and surrounded by a dome. The dome above which there is a wooden canopy is decorated with geometrical devices and flowers in gold colours. Around the mausoleum are numerous tombs of the members of the family, and Zana Rauza or the burial place of the ladies of the Saint's family. The descendants of Sheikh Salim Chisti by his daughter-side are still found in Budaun district, who trace their ancestry from one Sheikh Khoobi better known by





his title of Qutub-Uddin Khan, the Governor of Bihar in Jehangir's regime.

Buland Darwaza

The marvel of the entire group of buildings and the grandest object of attraction is the Buland Darwaza, lofty gateway or the gate of victory. Splendid as it is, it is surpassing in grandeur and is truly called the highest and greatest gateway in India, and ranks amongst the biggest in the world. It was erected by Emperor Akbar in 1601, to commemorate the Victory over southern India, and on the east of the central archway this fact is recorded in bold Arabic characters. The height from the pavement to the top is 134 feet and from the pavement to the roadway below is another 42 feet. A flight of 120 steps leads to the summit from which a splendid view of the adjacent districts and a distant glimpse of the Taj 25 miles away is presented before the eye.

Even to a casual observer this splendid and exceedingly imposing edifice cannot fail to impress the symmetry of its proportion and the sublimity and grace of its general appearance.

Mosque of Fatehpur Sikri

The grand mosque as it is called, lies to the west of the shrine of Sheikh Salim Chisti. The mosque was built in 1571 and its design is said

to be copied from one in Mecca. It was built during the life time of the Sheikh, who used to offer his prayer regularly in it. It was in this Juma Masjid or Chathedral Mosque of Fatehpur Sikri, in the 24th year of his reign, that Akbar assumed the title of the Imam of the age and declared that in the person of His Majesty united the temporal and the religious powers. Assuming this position the Emperor on the first Friday of Jamadi-us-Sani, 937 A. D. read his first and last Khutba. He while reading the following Khutba composed by Faizi, from the pulpit, it is said with authority, became suddenly nervous and stammered. He felt a tremor in his body and had to descend from the pulpit leaving the unfinished duties to be performed by the Court Khatib Hafiz Mohammad Amin :—

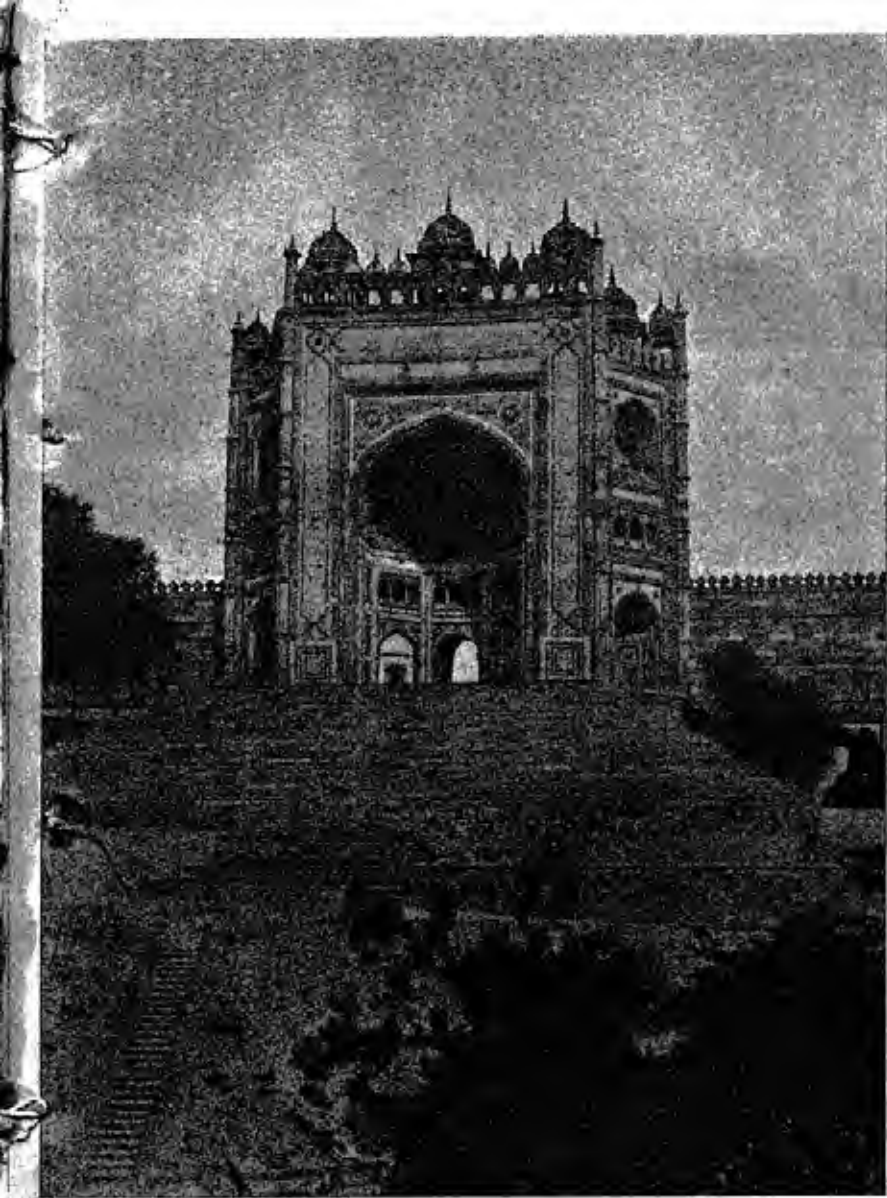
- (۱) بگام آنکه مارا خسروی داد
دل دانا و بازو تو داد
- (۲) بعدل و داد مارا ارهمنون کرد
بجز عدل از ضمیر ما برون کرد
- (۳) بود وصفش ز حد فهم برون
نعالی شانه الله اکبر

In the name of Him who gives us sovereignty
Who gave us a wise heart and a strong hand.
Who guided us in equity and Justice

And banished from our mind everything except Justice.

His attributes are beyond thought,

Exalted is His majesty ! God is great.



Buland Darwaza. View from south
'Copyright, Archaeological Survey of India.'



The mosque proper is divided into three portions and at the end is a set of fine chambers above which are zenana galleries. The walls and surroundings are richly painted giving a display of a variety of geometrical designs. The following is the inscription on the main arch about the date of the construction of the mosque.

دردمان شه جهان اکبر کہ از و ملک دانتظام آمد
 شیخ الاسلام مسجدیہ آراستہ کرمہ کعبہ احترام آمد
 سال انعام ابن بنائی رفیع ثانی المسجد العزَام آمد
 سنہ ۹۸۹ ہجری

In the reign of the king of the world Akbar
 To whom is due the discipline of state,
 The Sheikh of the age laid out a mosque
 Which on account of its chasteness deserves reverence
 like the Kaba.

The year of the completion of this lofty edifice
 Is found in the words, duplicate of the Holy place.

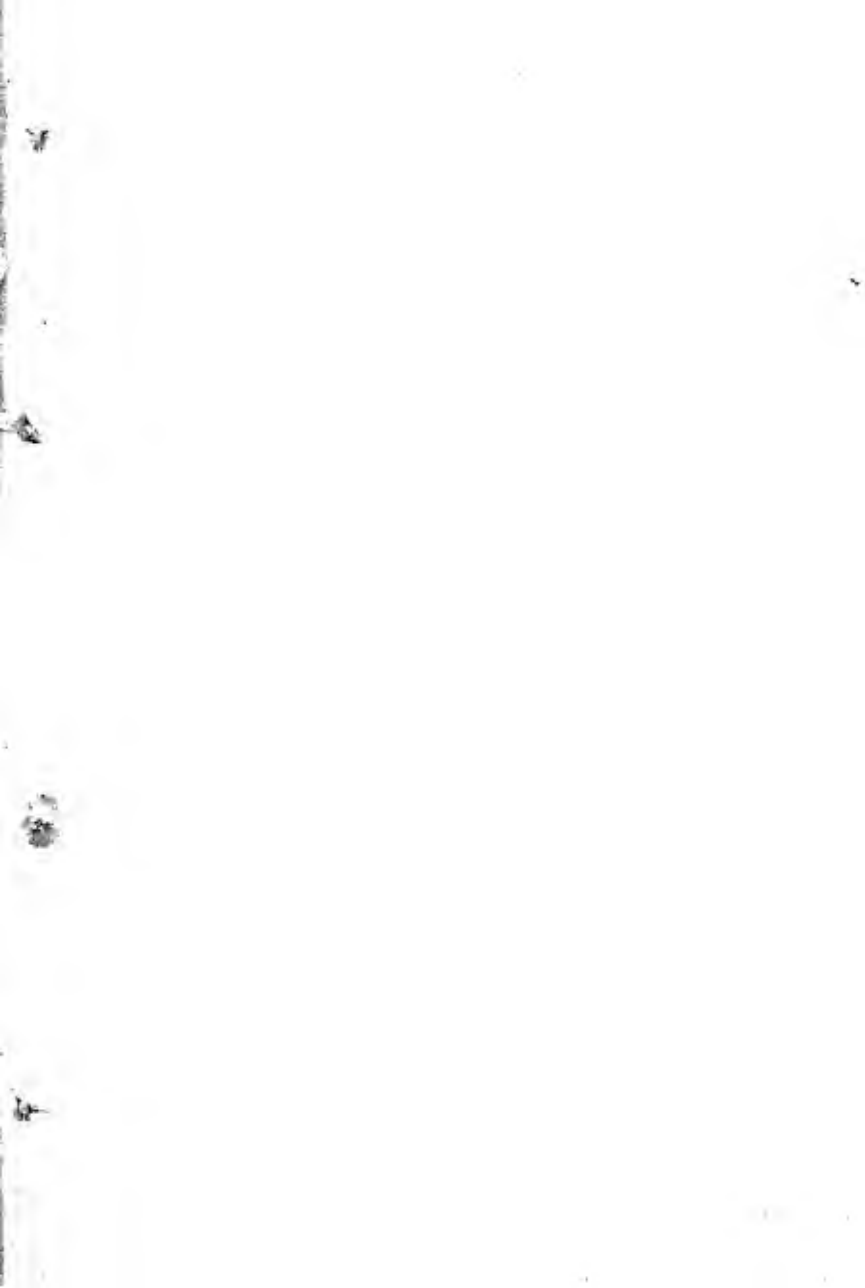
On the north-west side of the mosque are the houses of Faizi and Abul Fazal, the famous poet and historian brothers of Akbar's court, who were his intimate friends. The houses are built of redsand stone, in a style similar to that of other domestic buildings.

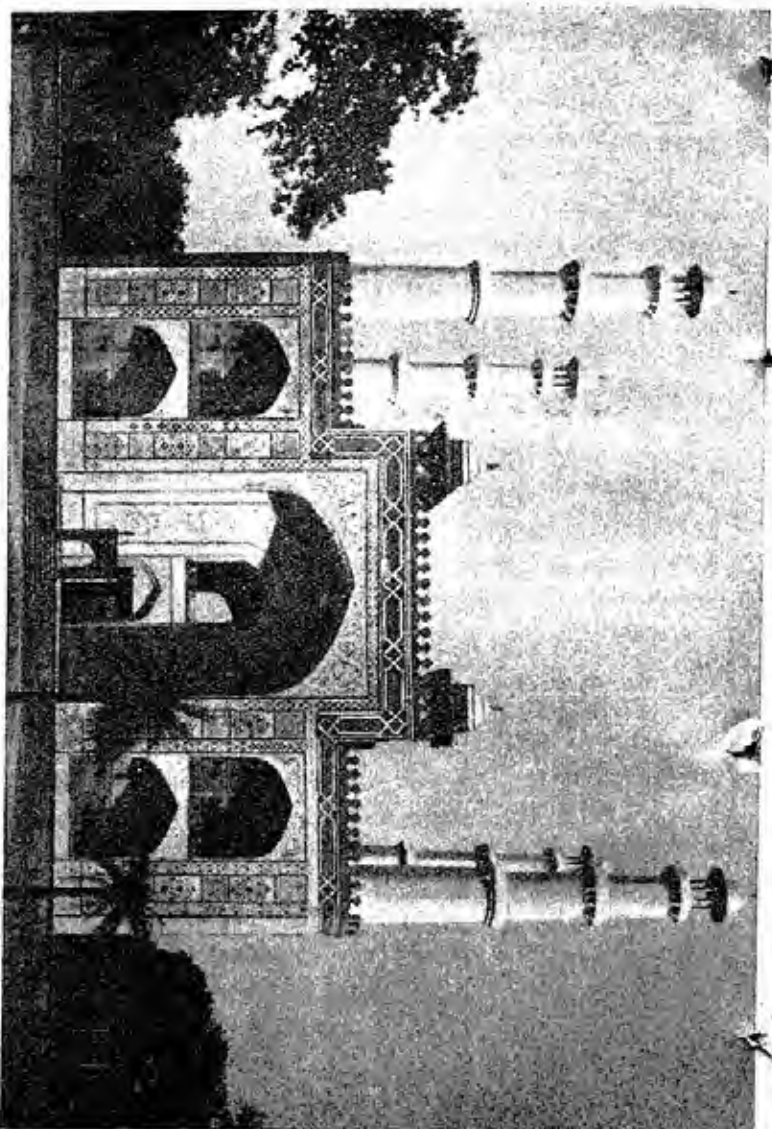
To the north of Abul Fazal's house, is the Birbal's residence. Birbal was amongst Akbar's most favourite companions whose wit and humour was a constant source of enjoyment to the

Emperor and the courtiers. It is a two storied building ornamented with carvings of good finish. The chief beauty of the building lies in the fact that although small in size it is exceedingly delicate and handsome. The whole structure is of stone and no timber has been used in any part. The palaces of Hindu princes are some of the most superb of the whole series of the buildings in this quarter. Fergusson describes them as "The richest, the most beautiful as well as the most characteristic of his (Akbar's) buildings". Here, are three small pavilions which are said to have been erected to please and accomodate his favourite wives. The royal stables which are to the north-west of Hindu princes' palace, used to accomodate horses, elephants and camels. They are made of redsand-stone and are of mosaic construction.

Hiran Minara

The Elephant Tower or the Hiran Minara, is a circular minaret quite unique in shape and design. It is 90 feet high and is studded with imitation elephant tusks in stone, giving the whole a most remarkable appearance. According to the tradition the tower has been erected on the spot where his favourite elephant was buried and from its summit Akbar used to fire at games which were driven for the purpose by beaters. The popular name 'Hiran Minara' is also justified from the facts that antelopes abound in its neighbourhood even to the present day.





Hathi Pol

A little further down the hill is the Hathi Pol, or the Elephant Gate, so called from the fact that on a lofty pedestal there is a statue of two colossal life-size elephants, with their trunks entwining each other as if in the act of fighting. The head of the statues are broken and the chief ornamentations of the gateway are thus spoilt. The gateway measures 48 ft. by 37 ft. and its height is 49 ft. on the west and 29 ft. on the east or inner side. The other important buildings of note are Sangin Burj, the Karavan Sarai, the Hauz, the Baoli and the ancient Jhil.

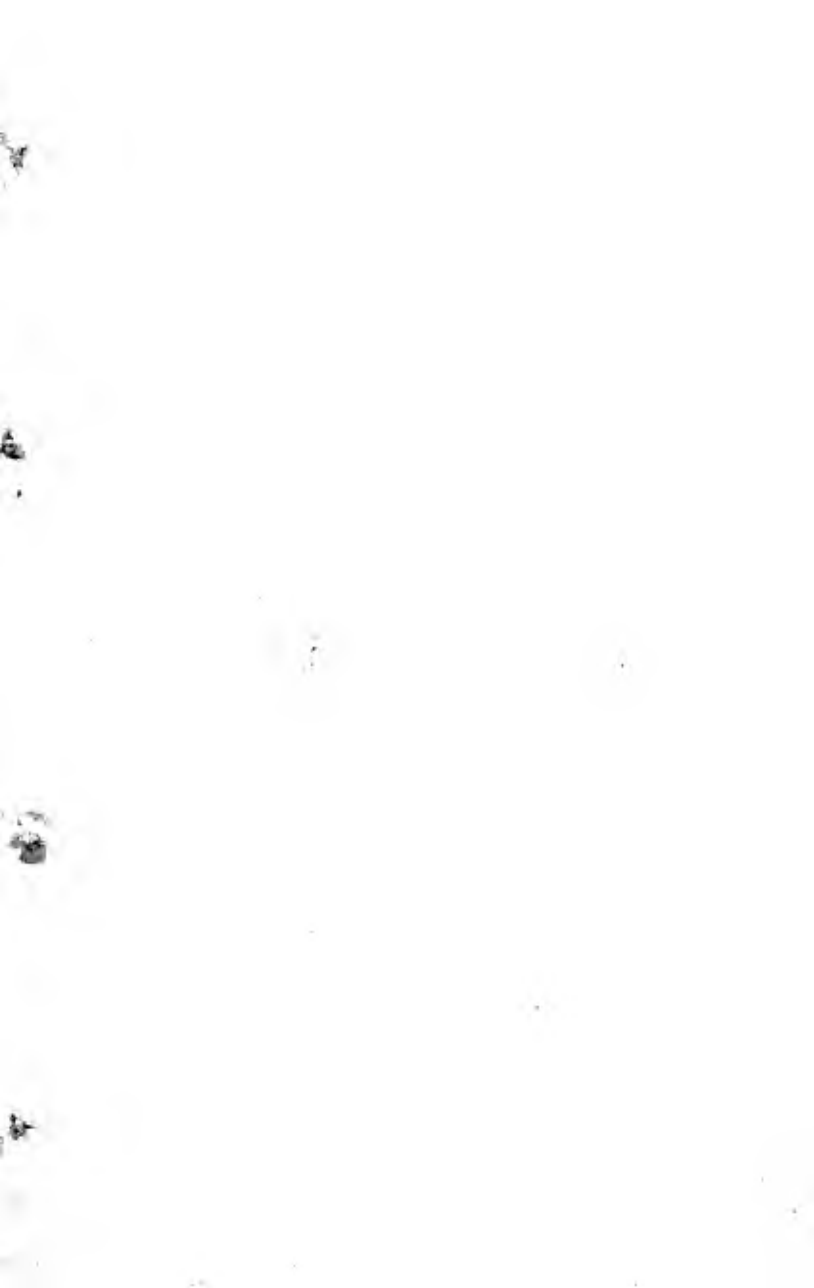
Sikandra

It is a village at a distance of five miles from Agra on the main road running between Muttra and Agra. The village derives its name from Sultan Sikandar Lodi, the first ruler to make Agra his capital. There are some remains of old buildings and the only extant building of Sikander's time is a Baradri which was afterwards adopted as tomb of Mariam Zamani, the wife of Akbar. Sikandra is famous only on account of the tomb of Emperor Akbar, in the garden of Bahist-a-bad. The tomb was designed by the Emperor himself, and it is the most characteristic of Akbar's buildings, but being incomplete Jehangir almost immediately after his accession completed it with certain modifications. The

present structure, is perhaps the most remarkable building of its kind in India.

The tomb stands in the midst of an extensive garden which covers about 150 acres, and is enclosed by a lofty wall with octagonal towers at the angles and four gateways midway on each side. These gateways are of deep red sandstones. At each corner of the gateways is a minaret of white marble. For them, and the stately height and imposing appearance these gates are often mistaken for a palace.

Above the ground portal is the Nakkar Khana or music gallery, a spacious arched chamber, in which after sunrise and at dawn kettle drums were beaten in honour of the dead. From the gateway a broad paved causeway leads to the main tomb which stands on a platform of white marble over 400 ft. long, and consists of a five storied building. The lowest is 30 ft. in height and 320 ft. on each side exclusive of towers, and is composed of wide and open arches, ten on each side. A sloping passage leads from the main entrance to the mortuary hall and here in a vault repose the mortal remains of the Greatest of the Moghals in eternal peace. The tomb itself is quite plain and bears no inscription. By the side of the tomb for many years lay the books, raiments and armour of the Emperor, but were carried away by the Jats of Bharatpur. The





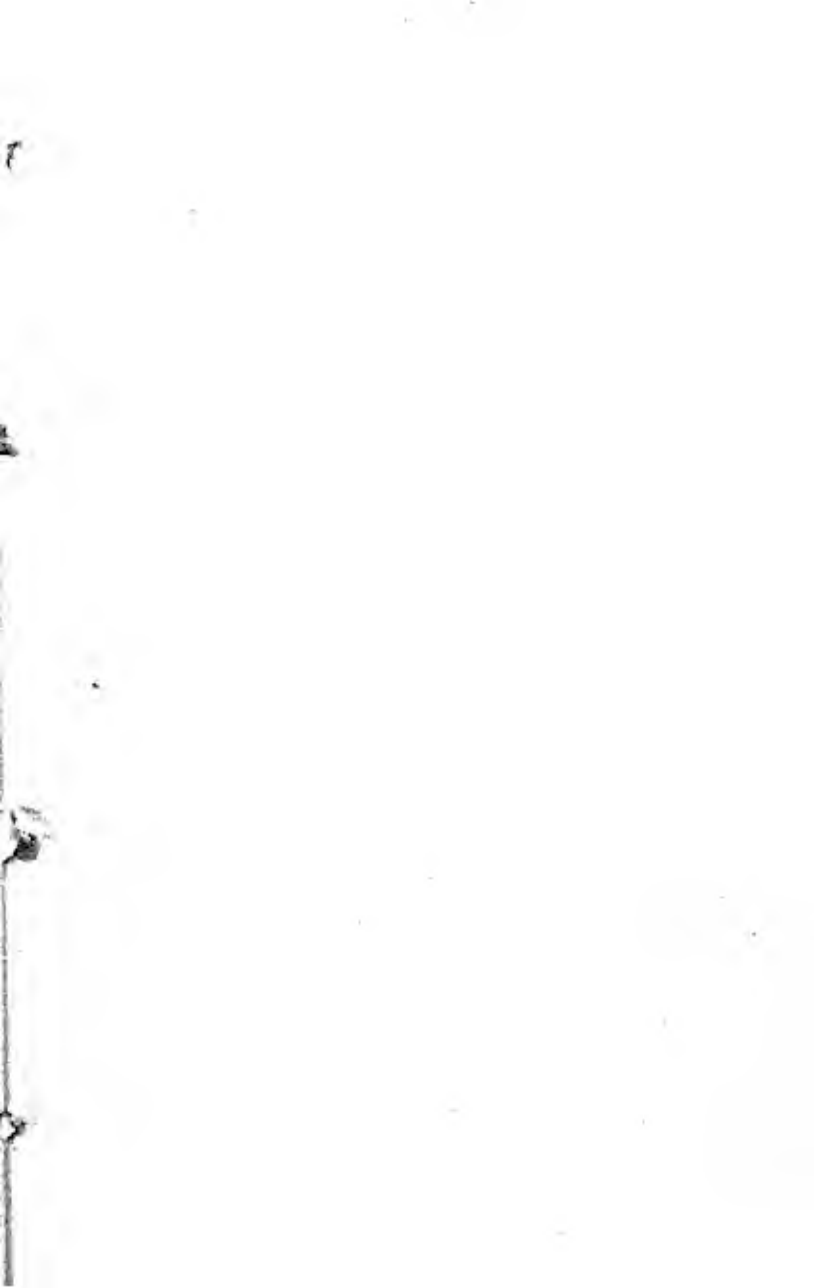
The Gateway of Sikandra

mortuary hall is covered with dark-blue plaster in gold. The tomb of Akbar is so situated that his head is to the west, while in accordance with the prevailing Mohammadan custom the deadmen's face is to be turned in the direction of the west. But Akbar's face is to the east. No explanation has so far been given by any Moghal historian about this revolt from the precept of Islam, although it is said that Akbar died in all the forms of a good Muslim. The tomb of Akbar has also invoked much admiration and recognition, specially by the foreign statesmen, who always paid glowing tributes to the memory of the Emperor.

Above the ground floor rises the four remaining stories each smaller than that below it. The first fourteen feet nine inches high, and measuring 186 feet on each side, is built of red stone with decorated arches and is crowned at each corner by a group of Kiozques with white marble domes. The third and fourth are of a similar design. The highest storey which is open to the sky is surrounded by an outer wall of marble trellis work of the most beautiful pattern elaborately carved out of solid blocks and representing the variety of Geometrical design of the most chaste and intricate workmanship. On the raised platform in the centre of the white marble enclosure inside is a false cenotaph of white marble. Exactly in the same position is the

real tomb stone in the basement. This is cut out of a single block of white marble and is so exquisitely carved with arabesque tracery of delicate and lovely design as to represent live blossoms and flowers scattered over a snowy sheet. At the head of the tomb stone are inscribed in bold relief the word "Allah-ho-Akbar" and at the foot "Jalle Jalalhu" and these words are enough indication to tell who lies below. On either sides are inscribed in Arabic characters the ninety-nine attributes of God. The two minarets on either side of the main entrance had their tops blown up by the Jats, when they sacked Agra, in 1774, thus spoiling the grandeur of this elegant structure. There are Persian inscriptions on the Southern portal and on the arches of the gateway interior of the mausoleum and on each of the 36 arches of the upper-most story around the sarcophagus of the tomb of the Empire. The quotations are avoided here for brevity's sake. The following giving the date of the Emperor's death are inscribed over the arch of the gateway

طائیه از دواق نهم چرخ برتر است
 روشن ز سائیه اهل رخ تابنده اختر است
 این طاق زیب نهم تلک و هفت کشور است
 از دوضئه منور کاشانه اکبر است
 تاریخ دوازدهم جمادی الاخر سنه هزار و چهارده هجری





Itimad-ud-Daula

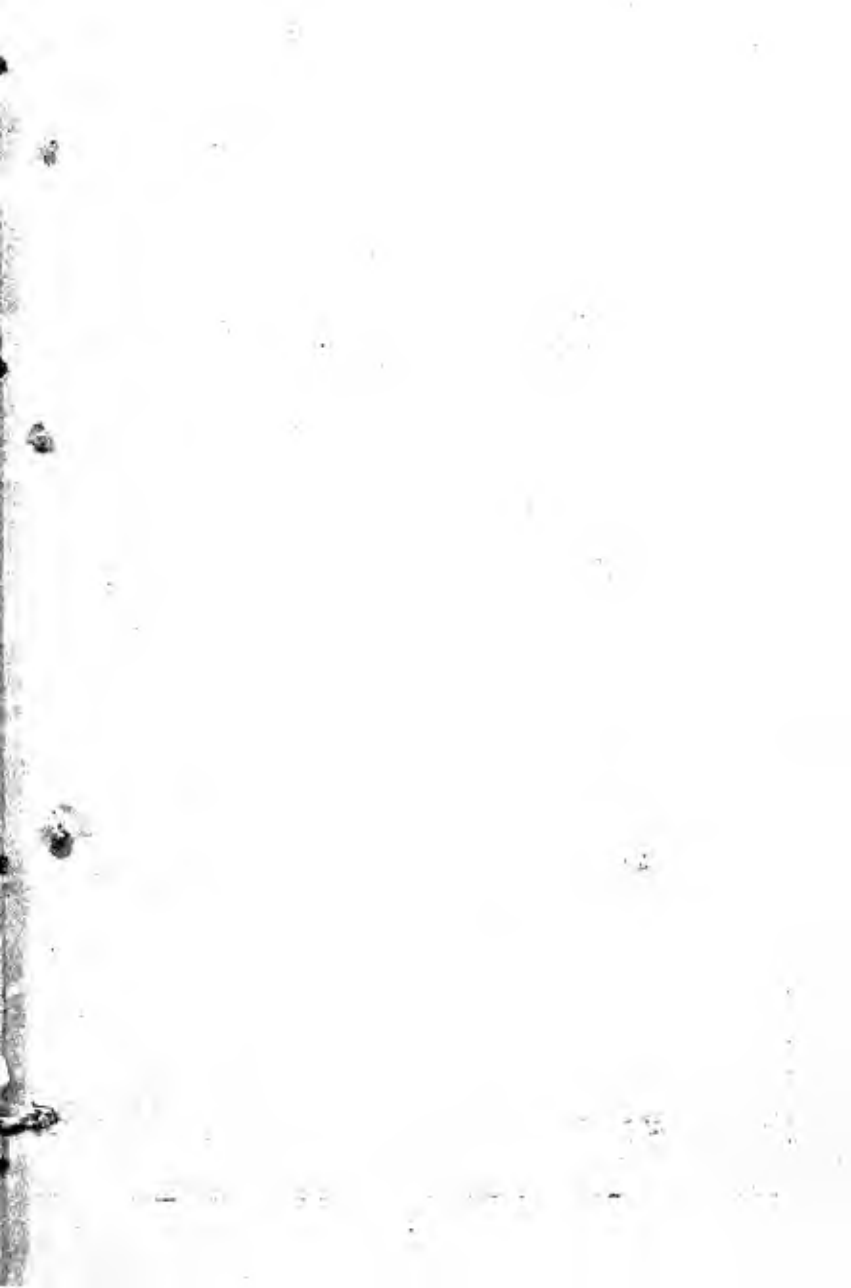
This is a niche higher in loftiness than the highest heaven,
Its shade has given lustre to the shining stars,
To the nine heavens and seven climes this niche has given
their trace,
For it belongs to the King Akbar's illuminated resting place.
12th Jumadi-ul-Akhir, 1014 A.H (1605 A.D.)

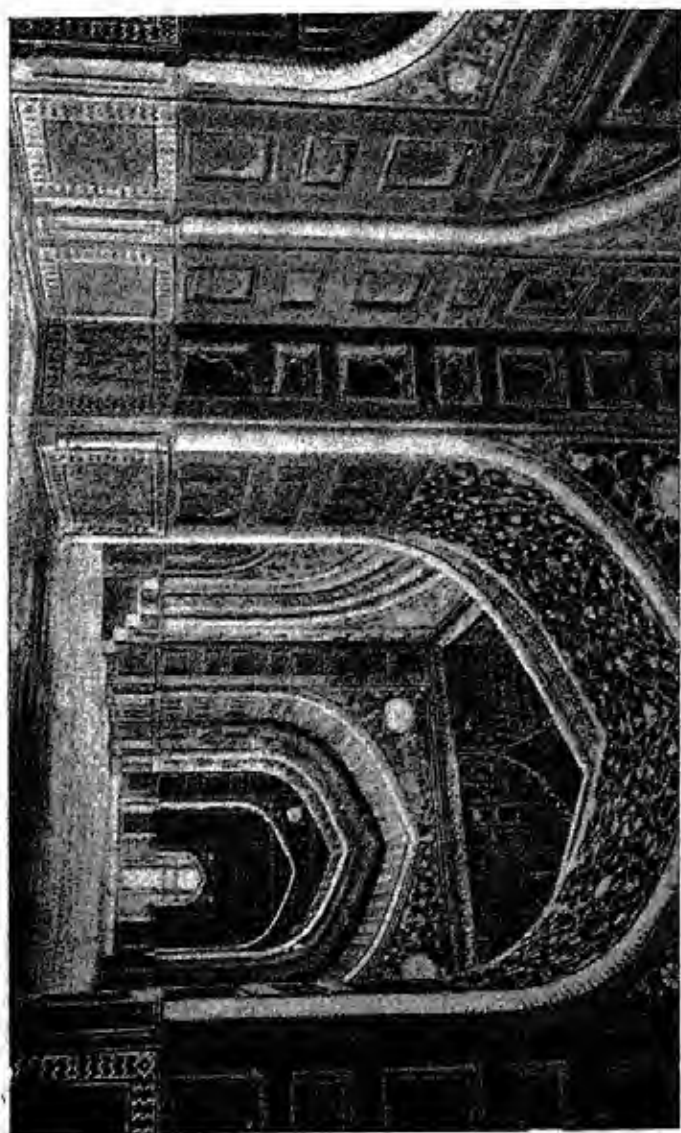
There are other buildings in Sikandra, which deserve some mention. The Kanch Mahal is a very fine specimen of early 17th century domestic architecture. It was built by Jehangir for his wife Jodhabai. Soraj Bhan Ka Bagh is another building at some distance from the Kanch Mahal. Further east is a remarkable statue of a life-size horse carved out of solid red stone. Nothing is known of its origin or history although numerous stories are afloat about it. Khwaja Itibar Khan's (one of Jehangir's eunuchs) Sarai and tank are seen partially in ruins and various other old buildings are also places of some interest for the historians.

Tomb of Itimad-ud-Daula

Itimad-ud-daula, after whom the garden tomb is known, is the surname of Mirza Ghias Beg, father of Nur Jehan and grandfather of Mumtaz-Mahal was a Persian adventurer from Tehran. He was created a Wazir by Jehangir and earned the title of Itimad-ud-Daula. He died at Kangra on his way to Kashmir (1621-22). His body was brought to Agra by Nur Jehan, who raised over

it the present mausoleum which was completed in 1628. He was an excellent poet, and of genial and humerous temperament. He was universally loved, respected and always held in great esteem by those who ever came in contact with him. He performed his ministerial duties to the satisfaction of all and was always anxious to do good to the people. The garden tomb is situated on the left bank of the Jumna river across the pontoon bridge. It stands in the centre of a garden upon a stone platform, measuring 149 feet square, and 4 feet high from the ground. It is a double storied building and the lower hall is 22 feet 3 inches on each side. The small chambers attached to the hall contain tombs of other members of the same family. The inlaid coloured stone works representing beautiful patterns of flowers, cypress trees, and other decorations in arabesque design produce a most agreeable effect. The marble lattice work on the walls, admitting sufficient light and air, present a rare example of delicacy of design, contributing materially to enhance the beauty of the building. The real tombs of the Wazir and his wife are in the hall, the floor of which are of white marble richly decorated with mosaic work. On the walls there are inscriptions in Tughra, from the verses of Holy Quran. The building being throughout of finest white marble, is rectangular in shape. At each corner of the building stands an octagonal tower supported on eight carved pillars. Owing





to its graceful proportion, the grandness of mosaic work, the richness of its ornamentation, it may fairly be claimed as a typical example of the highest stage of decorative architecture achieved by the Moghals. The wall of the mausoleum to the west touches the waters of Jumna and a fine view of the river front of the city is envisaged from the minars on the four corners.

Old monuments in the city and suburbs

The Juma Masjid or Cathedral mosque is opposite to the principal gateway of the fort on the North-west side. It was built by Jehan Ara Begum, the eldest daughter of Shahjehan, mainly from the savings of her personal allowances. The mosque is built of red sandstone on a raised platform. The main building is 130 feet long and 100 feet broad and is reached by a flight of steps 11 feet high. There are four minarets at each corner of the mosque. It is a fine structure of bold design with excellent finish and magnificent proportions. It was built in 1058 A.H. at a cost of five lakhs and it took five years for its completion. The mosque has three portions panelled with white marble, having borders of red stones supported by a row of fine archways, one in the centre and the remaining in either sides, all opening on a spacious court-yard. From the four corners of the roof rise four slender minaretes and from its rear three large

domes inlaid with alternate stripes of white marble and sandstone. The central or main arch of the mosque bears inscriptions from the Holy Quran "Surah-Shamsh". There are also inscriptions in Persian suitable for a building dedicated to the Almighty. The mosque was closed to the Muslims after the mutiny of 1857 due to the fear of a popular rising, but was returned to the Muslims at the time of Lord John Lawrence, Governor-General of India. At present there are various dirty shops of earthenware in small huts surrounding the building which have altogether spoiled its grandeur. It seems that neither the local Municipal authorities nor the archaeological department have cared to make the site of this ancient place of worship dedicated to Almighty, clean and imposing.

The Ram Bagh or Rani Bagh is at a few minutes' drive from the main Railway station. It is one of the oldest gardens in Agra, as mentioned in the memoirs of Babar, a beautiful place of recreation and scene of many an imperial picnics in his time. The jovial Emperor Babar often spent leisure hours, with his courtiers and jolly companions in this garden sitting in the moon-light in the open air saying :—

ابوست نو بهار و دمه دل بران خوش است
 بابر بعیش کوهی که عالم دوباره نیست

How delightful for a moment are the clouds, of a new spring,
Try, O Babar ! to be merry, for we cannot again come to
this world !

The corpse of Babar was also temporarily deposited in this garden before it was removed to Kabul. The name Ram Bagh was given to it by the Marathas, while Babar called it Aram Bagh or the garden of repose.

The Chini-ka-Rauza, is the mausoleum of Afzal Khan, a native of Shiraz who came in the 17th century and entered the service of Jehangir in 1617. He was appointed Dewan or accountant. The Rauza is made from the beautiful porcelain or glazed tiles. The work is exceedingly fine. It is built after the old Pathan Style with inscriptions from the Holy Quran on the top of the inner chamber.

The tomb of Firoz Khan, Akbari Masjid, Masjid of Motamid Khan, Dargah of Shah Allauddin Majzooob, Hammam or Bath of Allah Wardi Khan, garden of Buland Khan, the mosque of Humayun in ruins Chattri of Raja Jaswant, Masoleum of Jodha Bai, the Masjid of Alamgir, are all of historical value.

Moghal Architecture

In the foregoing pages I have tried to narrate briefly the various mausoleums and monuments built by the Moghals. In the present chapter I propose to discuss very briefly some of the special features of the Moghal Architecture in India, as within the limited space at my disposal in this small book it is not possible to deal with the subject more extensively.

"As in the architectural monuments of every people can be read the chronicles of their religion, its governments, and its manners, so the existing buildings of the Muslims constitute an invaluable record of the canons of their faith, the customs of their social and intellectual life, the growth and consolidation of their wonderful empire...(Scott)."

Now, if we locate the Islamic colouring in the buildings of the Moghals, we find that their buildings in India are the product of pure Islamic culture.* Nowhere in the world the Muslim

* Fergusson's analysis of the Indian Architecture of the Mohammadan period confirms the belief that between Hindu and Saracenic ideals there is a great gulf fixed and that the zenith of Moghal architecture in the reigns of Jahangir and Shahjehan was only reached by throwing off the Hindu influences which affected the so called 'mixed' style of Indo-Mohammadan art. There is no trace of Hinduism in the works of Jahangir and Shahjehan — *History of Indian Architecture.*

art has shown such perfection in buildings as in India. If we go back to the history of the Muslim architecture, we find that with certain exceptions the Muslims copied the art from the old extant buildings in the countries, which they conquered.

But whatever they took from others they gave it quite a new colouring of their own. With a tinge of originality, skill and dexterity, they developed a new style which is considered as purely Islamic.

The mosques, domes and tombs* are the most outstanding features of the Muslim architectural monuments, as the sanctity attached to them has often helped to spare them from the cruel hands of the vandals. If one considers all the differences of country and climate, one may assert that the Muslim architecture is homogenous and uniform, and possesses a number of characteristic features of its own. This is mainly due to the result of the inspiration from religious ideals. The mosques of Cairo and Constantinople and the tombs in Egypt and Spain and other monuments and mausoleums in the Islamic countries amply display common Muslim religious ideals. According to a Muslim, 'Allah' is the perfect embodiment of beauty and the things dedicated to Him are like-wise beautiful. The idea of Muslim

* Fergusson says that the Rajput custom of building cenotaph or Chhatris on the sight of Chieftains' Funeral pyre was borrowed from the Mohammadans.

paradise is an aesthetic one. It is a garden with water flowing under the most beautiful pavillions, and the highest aesthetic enjoyment in such a garden will be the sight of the perfect beauty of the Creator or 'Allah'. This ideal Muslim paradise has exercised a very great influence on the Muslims including princes and sovereigns, who requisitioned the services of the most famous architects and artisans from every part of the world for the construction of their buildings on this supposed ideal paradise, and it is for this reason that the Muslim buildings generally contain delightful gardens with green trees, attractive shrubs and singing birds. The express interdiction of the worship of images prevented the production of pictures and statuary in the Islamic architecture. But to make the buildings more imposing and decorative the art of handicraft or arabesque was invented resulting in the creation of a new art called calligraphy.

If we are to judge the Muslim architecture from this point of view, we will find a great similarity in all the Islamic buildings irrespective of climates and countries. The Arabs, the Moors, the Turks, the Egyptians and the Indian Muslims, have all built their edifices after one and the same ideal. The basis of Mohammad's (Prophet) idealism was the concept of the Unity of God-head: 'There is One God'. The Islamic architecture may be singled out from the rest of the world in

having introduced the 'Mihrab'* pointed arches, pendentives. and the glazed or painted tiles, of which the world was ignorant before the advent of the Islamic architecture.

It cannot be denied that in India the art of architecture was much developed and that the Buddhists were the only builders who had introduced the art all over the Western Asia. But when the Moghal reign reached its zenith, the glory of art and architecture was also running apace to it. The present buildings of the Moghals afford sufficient proof to this, as its several features contain certainly something of Hindu-Buddhist art. The Moghal kings according to their ideas made much improvement in the existing art and so drastic was the change that the old peculiarities were lost sight of, and a new art of Moghal architecture was evolved. Fergusson has given definite data about the Moghal Architecture in India saying that it has made an evolution in the

* Mihrab, 'The symbolic idea connected with the pointed arch preceded the general use of it as an organic structural feature in place of the round arch and horizontal beam. It appealed to the devout Muslim because it symbolized the two fundamental concepts of his faith: 'God is One' and 'Muhammad is His Prophet'. It was the architectural symbol of the hands joined in prayer; it pointed the way to Mecca and to Paradise, and demonstrated mathematically the divine truth that all things convey towards and meet in the One. ... E. B. Havell. See M. Prisse D' Avennes. 'L' Art-Arche.'

old architectural art, and due to its various specialities it can be truly termed as an architecture of its dynasty. Havell, on the other hand, has tried to undermine the Moghal architecture, and to create a controversy about the Muslim buildings in India. He says that it was built due to the Hindu artisans, and that it had no similarity with the Muslim style of Spain or Egypt, giving it a bare communal colouring, but this is mischievous, as there was no question of Hindu and Muslim in architectural art. Although he says that the organisation of building craft is very cosmopolitan; 'No class of society has stood so strongly for religious tolerance and principle of universal brotherhood of man as the master builders, and none have done more for the spread of civilization, peace and good-will among all men. However bitter religious and social animosities might be, the building fraternity know none of them. Pagan craftsman build for the Christian, Christian for the Muslim and Buddhist for Jain and Hindus, and Hindus for every sect.' So it can safely be said that the new art of architecture grew up to perfection under the influence of the Moghal culture without the question of Hindu or Muslim, and that in all the Moghal buildings you will find the same underlying ideals of 'Beauty' and 'Unity of God-Head'. The Taj, Itimad-ud-Daula, the buildings at Fatehpur Sikri, the Jami-Masjid of Delhi and other royal palaces are unquestionably the illustrious Islam and India.

The Moghals have very carefully selected all the fine materials of marble and sandstone to which they could lay their hands upon for the construction of their buildings. The delicate and fine work on the marble sheet has so exquisitely been chiselled out as if it appears that the leaves, flowers and festoons have all sprung up from the marble within and look so natural at first sight that one wavers to believe it to be the work of chisel and human hands specially in Taj, which surpasses any of the buildings of the world in massive grandeur and sculptural imagination. The most remarkable feature of these buildings is that, though very massive, they appear far smaller in size, and look far more pleasing to the eye, and far more pregnant with human feelings, ever suggesting the aesthetic attributes of the romantic and the tender in beauty, than any other building ever produced through human agency.



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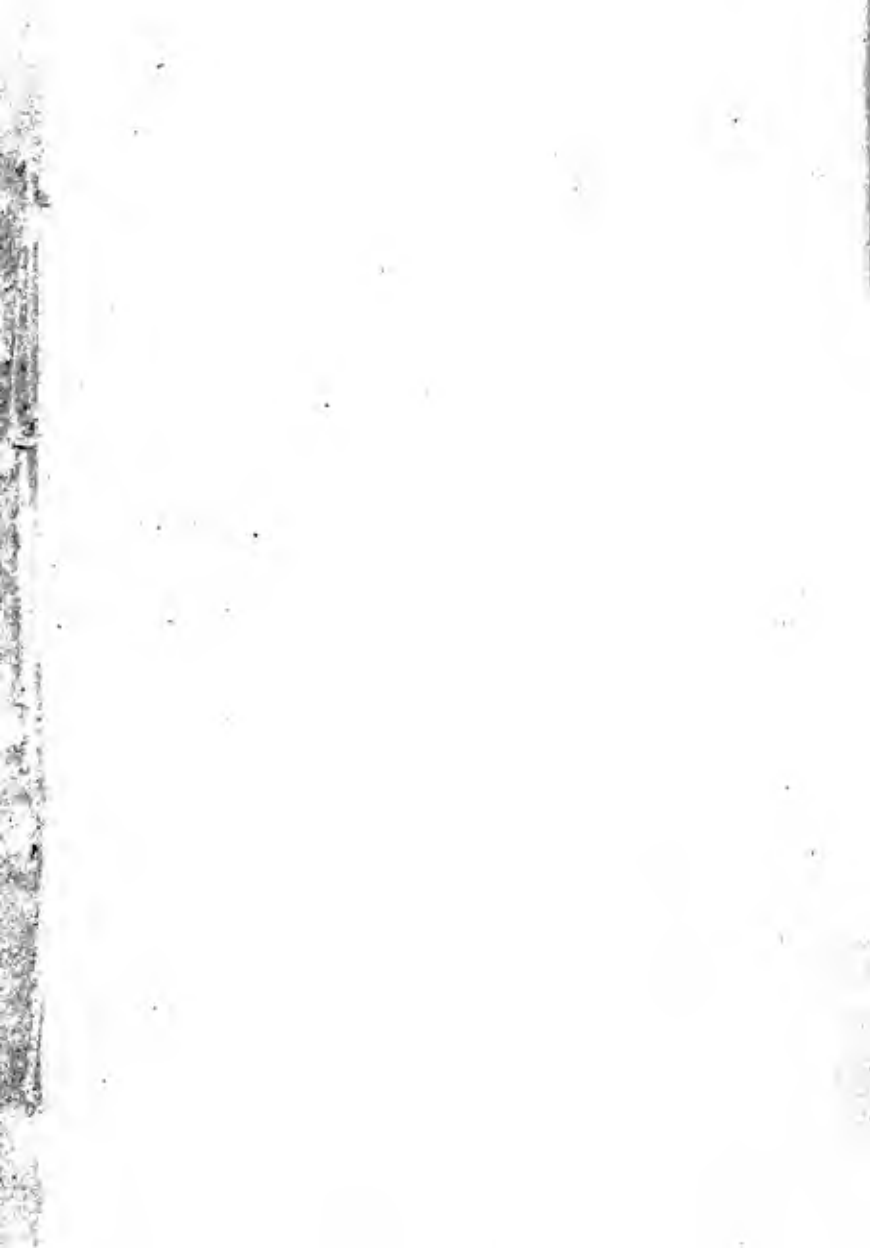
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